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DUNGEON®

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Waiting for 222

By Christopher Perkins

Back in September, we announced that the magazines are going on hiatus. This issue will be the last new *Dungeon* issue you'll see for a while as we focus our attention on the launch of the next edition. Normally, we set aside the last page of the issue to tell you what's coming next month. Since there won't be an issue next month, we've instead created a back-page index listing all of the adventures published between issues 201 and 221. (For a complete and comprehensive list of content appearing in the first two hundred issues of *Dungeon*, download issue 200.) As for issue 222 and beyond, no plans have been announced yet.

Our theme this month is "past, present, and future," so we've elected to publish three adventures that span multiple editions. "Lowdown in Highport" is a 1st Edition AD&D adventure tied to the classic Slave Lords series (it can be run as a prelude to module A1, *Slave Pits of the Undercity*), and it comes with 4E conversion stats for the monsters. "Vainglorious" is a 4E adventure featuring the most iconic of all monsters—a dragon—as its main villain. And finally, we have "The Battle of Emridy Meadows," a 5th Edition adventure that harkens back to events rooted in the World of Greyhawk campaign setting.

Speaking of past, present, and future, this issue marks the end of my 5-year stint as senior producer. I am relinquishing that title and polymorphing into the lead story- and world-builder for D&D. I'll be spending much of my time dreaming up stories to tell across a multitude of D&D experiences, including the tabletop roleplaying game, as well as authoring story bibles to share with our various business partners. In addition, I'll be doing what everyone else on the R&D team is doing: getting the new edition ready for wide release.

Take a gander at the masthead in the far left-hand column. Every name listed there is someone to whom I owe my thanks for their hard work and dedication. Some of them have already found new adventures to occupy their time. As for the rest of us, well . . . miles to go, and all of that. I'd like to thank Greg Bilsland, Steve Winter, Jon Schindehette, Chris Sims, and Kate Irwin in particular for giving the ezines so much of their time and attention in recent months, when the sheer number of distractions made focusing on the ezines next to impossible. I'd also like to thank a few people who aren't on this month's masthead: Will Doyle, for giving us five feature-length adventures in one year that are among the best that *Dungeon* has ever published; Kim Mohan, for his years of experience, his professionalism, and his mastery of words; the late Mark Monack, one of our community's greatest spokespeople, who gave us the benefit of the doubt more often than not; and all past publishers, editors, and producers who, over the years, gave *Dragon* and *Dungeon* the respect they're due.

I know that many folks are unhappy about the magazines going on hiatus. I have always been a champion and protector of their legacy, so putting them aside to work on other projects fills me with a mixture of angst and relief. I support the decision because it means we're not releasing a product that looks and feels like it fell off an assembly line. The magazines deserve better, and they'll be back when they're good, ready, and relevant.

Lowdown in Highport

An AD&D adventure for characters of levels 3-5 (with 4th Edition D&D monster conversion notes)

By Thomas M. Reid

Illustrations by Ben Wootten and Christopher Burdett
Cartography by Jared Blando

The town of Highport, once a human community overlooking Wooly Bay from its perch on the northern coast of the Pomarj, fell prey to hordes of humanoids swarming out of the jungle-covered hills surrounding the settlement. Though the orcs, goblins, kobolds, ogres, and gnolls razed much of the place in their ferocious rampages, the smoldering ruins they left behind soon became a new kind of community, a place of trade between the humanoid "locals" and the unsavory human traders who have no compunction about doing business with them.

Slaves are a commodity in ready supply in Highport's market, since many pirates raid up and down the coast of the bay, putting fishing villages to the torch and filling their holds with captured refugees. Slavery has become a thriving business in the town, and rumors abound of a cartel of Slave Lords who run things from behind the scenes, filling their coffers in secret from the buying and selling of human chattel. The trade has become so prolific that the good folk to the north have grown tired of these depredations and decided to fight back.

Forces of righteousness and honor have recently descended upon Highport, some openly and others in secret, in various attempts to destroy the machinations of the Slave Lords and abolish the abominable enterprise that has taken far too many loved ones from home and hearth. One such doughty servant of goodness is Mikaro Valasteen, a cleric of Trithereon. Mikaro slipped unnoticed past the crumbling walls of Highport with a single mission: to rescue and transport as many slaves to their freedom as possible.

Mikaro and a handful of faithful assistants located a number of escaped slaves—as well as rescued a few more not sufficiently restrained and guarded—and shepherded them through the gates and beyond the reach of their humanoid tormentors, returning them to their lands and homes. This covert freedom brigade enjoyed remarkable success early on, since the servants of the Slave Lords were often lax in their vigilance and sloppy in their efforts to prevent loss of the "merchandise." After one too many shipments never made its destination, the humanoids stepped up their security and the normal channels of escape from Highport closed to Mikaro and his team. He cannot

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risk exposure by smuggling the freed slaves through the gates as merchandise any longer, since shipments of goods are now regularly stopped and checked.

No longer able to free the slaves in that manner, Mikaro began hiding his charges in an abandoned villa in a particularly rundown part of the town. Although they are safe for the moment, their numbers have grown unmanageable, and the priest fears it is only a matter of time before someone slips up and brings slavers to their doorstep.

Ever more desperate to find a new means of escape from Highport, Mikaro has started work on a plan that is both daring and dangerous. He intends to use a series of old sewers coupled with natural caverns running beneath the town as an escape route to the sea beyond the walls. But he needs someone to clear out the creatures and pitfalls he knows lie within.

Mikaro Valasteen

The free-spirited cleric of Trithereon cannot abide the idea of slavery in any form and has devoted the entirety of his service toward efforts to free the shackled wherever he finds them. He is not much to look at, but what Mikaro lacks in beauty, he more than makes up for in devotion and resolve.

Mikaro has worked toward dismantling slavery rings in numerous locations all along the Wild Coast for many years, so his mission in Highport is only the latest effort. He knows how to keep his head down and avoid notice, and he can act as churlish and evil as he needs to in order to put off suspicion. He uses this ability to blend in with unsavory types to move through the town with relative ease, but he knows that his subordinates are neither as skilled nor as comfortable with such antics as he is. He orders them to keep a much lower profile.

The Mission

Mikaro is looking for a group of adventurers willing to find and clear out a subterranean route connecting the sewers beneath the town to sea caves along the coast outside the walls. He hopes to use such a passage as an escape route for his freed slaves.

The characters can learn of the cleric's efforts in a number of ways and attempt to help him. Most likely, they came to Highport as part of a rescue mission instigated from elsewhere (such as at the conclusion of the adventure *Danger at Darkshelf Quarry*, which appeared in the *Against the Slave Lords* adventure compilation), in which case they should be told about Mikaro ahead of time and given instructions to seek him out. If the characters do not attempt to find him, or if they have traveled to Highport for unrelated reasons, Mikaro makes contact with them before they attempt to enter the High City. He sends word through one of his underlings, asking the party to visit him in a small, private room at an inn near the port district. Read the following boxed text aloud to the players:

> Mikaro Valasteen is a stout but sinewy man of middling years, balding on top but with long, stringy dark hair that hangs to below his shoulders. His locks only partially obscure the fact that one ear is missing. He sits across the table, silent for a moment. "There are folks who need your help," he finally says. "A group of escaped slaves hide in the city because they can't flee. The gates are watched. They need a secret route out of town, and I think you're the folks to find and clear it for them."
>
> Mikaro stands and begins to pace, warming to his subject as he continues. "There are a number of sea caves along the coast below the city wall, and I believe some connect to the surface above. I've already explored several chambers and tunnels that link the basement of an abandoned villa where the refugees hide to the sewers below the city. I believe a path can be traced all the way through."
>
> He turns and places his hands on the table, giving you an intense stare. "Will you do this thing for me? Will you help these people, these long-suffering victims, return to their lives and loved ones?"

If the characters ask how Mikaro can be so certain a connection exists, he admits that he can't. He explains that he conducted some preliminary explorations and experiments using small floating corks tracked with magic (a *locate object* spell). The items were dropped into the sewers connected with the villa and eventually made it out to sea.

If the characters want to enter the city and start at the villa, read the following boxed text aloud:

> Mikaro shakes his head. "No, that's impossible. You aren't known here, which means that the scum watching the gates won't even let you through. And they're checking everything right now, both in and out. Even if you could somehow slip past them, the chances are too great that someone might follow you and discover the villa."
>
> The cleric taps the table with his finger. "No, the best way to do this is from the bottom up. You'll remain unnoticed and draw less attention to us."

If the characters bring up the issue of equipment, Mikaro promises to acquire any basic equipment they ask for (any items listed in the BASIC EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES COSTS tables in the *Player's Handbook*, up to a total value of 150 gp). He also throws in two *potions of healing*. If they mention rewards or payment, Mikaro is disappointed.

> "I had hoped you were here because you love freedom as much as I do, as much as those poor wretches who were taken from their lands and families do. But, if it's payment you want, then I have a little set aside. It's not much, only 200 gp, what we've taken from a couple of slave caravans' coffers. I had hoped to use it to increase our own supplies, but it's yours if you'll do this thing for us."

He makes no initial mention of any additional treasure that might be found during the group's excursion through the passages and tunnels, because he knows only about the crypts and doesn't condone grave robbing. If the party asks, he readily admits that hidden treasure troves might be found, and the adventurers are welcome to keep whatever valuables they find.

Notes for the DM

"Lowdown in Highport" is designed for six to eight characters of levels 3–5. It can be played as a standalone adventure but works best as a follow-up to module A0: *Danger at Darkshelf Quarry* (published in *Against the Slave Lords*) and/or a precursor to module A1: *Slave Pits of the Undercity*. A party wishing to attempt this adventure should include several fighters and at least one cleric, one magic-user, and one thief. A 3rd-level party should have seven or eight characters, including at least one elf and one dwarf.

Before running "Lowdown in Highport," read the adventure thoroughly to become familiar with all the information given about the scenario. Information in the encounter keys is generally divided into two sections. The boxed text should be read to the players when their characters enter an encounter area unless circumstances prevent the party from learning the information given. All other text is meant for you so that you can referee the encounter. Players might discover some or all of this information during the game, but they will not know it at the start of the encounter.

Monster and NPC Statistics

This adventure includes an abbreviated format for monster and NPC statistics:

AC = Armor Class
MV = Movement rate
HD = Hit Dice
hp = Hit points
#AT = Number of Attacks
D = Damage
SA = Special Attacks
SD = Special Defenses

Highport

The town of Highport sits on a small sheltered inlet along the northern coast of the Pomarj peninsula, facing the Wooly Bay. It is divided into two main parts: numerous docks and a port district right on the shore, and a walled urban area at the top of a steep bluff. When humans controlled and lived in Highport, both sections of the town were kept in good order. Since the humanoid invasion, much of the place has fallen into ruin, either razed during the initial attacks or through subsequent neglect.

The port district is little more than a shanty town, filled with ramshackle wooden buildings constructed out of spare planks, boards, and netting. The unstable structures often lean at odd angles, and the "streets" are really narrow, twisting alleys that frequently dead end. Only a handful of original structures still stand, including a couple of inns and several warehouses. Life in the port district is a dangerous, vermin-filled affair that frequently ends in bloody death.

The High City, as the upper area is known, has more breathing room, although its conditions are little better than the port district below. It was once surrounded by a high stone wall to protect it from the depredations of the marauding humanoids that roamed the hills beyond, but much of that protective barrier was demolished in the attacks. The High City is now a wasteland of rubble-strewn streets, and one building in three is a burnt-out shell.

A switchback road cut into the face of the bluff leads from one part of Highport to the other, still protected at each turn by a gated guardhouse. Though sufficient for all the foot traffic that once traveled along it, the road was too narrow to handle all the merchant wagons that needed to move between the two sections of the town, so a number of stout cranes of dwarven design were installed along the bluff to hoist cargo up and down. These are no longer functioning, and only two even remain in place. The rest were cast down during the invasion, crushing hundreds of refugees waiting to flee Highport by boat in the port district below. Those have since been disassembled, their parts used for constructing hovels.

Random Encounters

Each hour the characters are out in public in Highport, they have a 1 in 6 chance of a random encounter. If they do, roll 1d6 and consult the following table to determine what they encounter:

1d6	Encounter
1-2	City "Patrol"
3-4	Gnolls
5	Roustabouts (once only)
6	Slavers

City "Patrol"

The party encounters a group of two to five humanoids wandering the streets, searching for escaped slaves and enforcing whatever laws they feel are important at the moment. If the characters don't look like slavers or are otherwise behaving suspiciously, the patrol confronts them. Select from the following creatures.

Goblins (2-5): AC 6; MV 6″; HD 1-7 hit points; hp 4 each; #AT 1; D 1-4 (sling) or 1-6 (spear or short sword).

Orcs (2-5): AC 6; MV 9″; HD 1; hp 5 each; #AT 1; D 1-4 (light crossbow) or 1-6 (hand axe).

Half-Orc Fighters (2-5): AC 4; MV 9″; HD 1; hp 6 each; #AT 1; D 2-8 (broadsword) or 1-6 (shortbow).

Gnolls (2-5): AC 5; MV 9″; HD 2; hp 9 each; #AT 1; D 2-7 (pick) or 1-8 (battleaxe).

Roustabouts

A group of two to twelve kobolds and their ogre were hauling goods when their cart lost a wheel. Now their argument has devolved into an all-out fight that threatens to draw in everyone around them.

Kobolds (2-12): AC 7; MV 6″; HD 1-4 hit points; hp 3 each; #AT 1; D 1-6 (javelin) or 1-6 (club).

Ogre (1): AC 5; MV 9″; HD 4+1; hp 21; #AT 1; D 3-9 (club).

Slavers

A group of slavers and their guards are moving through the streets with fresh cargo in cages on carts, with other slaves shackled to and pulling the carts.

Merchants (1-4): AC 10; MV 12″; HD 1-6 hit points; hp 3 each; #AT 1; D 1-4 (dagger).

Guards (2-8): AC 6; MV 9″; HD 1-6 hit points; hp 4 each; #AT 1; D 1-6 (spear) or 2-8 (morningstar).

The Tides

The period of a tide cycle is about 12 hours, meaning over the course of a 24-hour day, there are two low and high tides, occurring at the same clock time in both the a.m. and p.m. The difference in sea level between low and high tide is approximately 12 feet. Over the long term, changes occur to the tidal schedule, but for the purposes of the adventure, these are unimportant.

The tide affects how easy it is to approach the tidal pools and sea caves. Use the table below to generate the period of the tide randomly. Roll 1d12 and fill in the result on the first line of the chart, then continue adding hours below that until you reach 12, at which point start over with 1 and continue until the entire chart is filled in.

For example, if you roll a 4, then you fill in the sequence as 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 1, 2, 3. Then, when the characters first inquire about the tides (either through personal investigation or questioning the locals in Highport, or when they first approach the tidal pools), you can tell them the tidal conditions:

Time	Result
__:00	Low Tide
__:00	Tide 2 feet above low, rising
__:00	Tide 4 feet above low, rising
__:00	Tide 6 feet above low, rising
__:00	Tide 8 feet above low, rising
__:00	Tide 10 feet above low, rising
__:00	High Tide
__:00	Tide 10 feet above low, falling
__:00	Tide 8 feet above low, falling
__:00	Tide 6 feet above low, falling
__:00	Tide 4 feet above low, falling
__:00	Tide 2 feet above low, falling

Continuing with the above example, if you originally rolled a 4 and the characters approach the sea caves at dusk (7 o'clock in the evening), then the tide is 6 feet above its minimum level (about halfway) and rising. Thus, 1 hour after they arrive, the tide has risen 2 more feet, and it will crest at 10 o'clock at night. The next low tide will occur at 4 o'clock in the morning, the optimum time to explore the tidal pools and sea caves. Track the passing of time in the adventure carefully so that, should the characters return to the tidal pools at any point, you will know the tidal conditions.

Adventure Troubleshooting

The characters might run afoul of the denizens of Highport before they even truly begin their quest to find an escape route for the slaves. Fortunately for the characters, many "citizens" of the despoiled town understand the value of fresh chattel and prefer to enslave the characters rather than kill them. If this happens, Mikaro and his team work to free survivors and the cleric even recovers any equipment you want them to have. Because they are now within the High City, the characters could choose to explore the subterranean route starting in the basement of the villa and descending to the sea caves. The adventure has been designed so that traveling this direction should work just as well.

Approaching the Sea Caves

If the characters don't take some reasonable precautions to avoid notice—for example, if they march openly along the beach while carrying obvious loads of adventuring gear under the suspicious gaze of the watch or guards—they are followed and confronted by a patrol before they can even begin (use the City "Patrol" statistics from the random encounters section). Wise groups who slip away unnoticed (perhaps at night) or depart by boat (many smaller craft head out into the bay for fishing each day) are not harassed.

Mikaro provides a detailed description of the location where he believes the characters have the best chance to find a way through to the villa. The particular spot is a stretch of the coastline several hundred yards to the west of the port, near a small, sheltered cove. The shore there is mostly steep and rocky, but that specific spot holds a tidal pool with a sandy

beach. He doesn't provide the characters with a map to the site for fear of it falling into the wrong hands.

The approach to the cove Mikaro has described is tricky, but not impossible. The characters could choose to hike there, but the tides affect how difficult this is. At low tide, a beach can be followed at normal movement speeds, but as the tide rises, the water covers it and crashes against rocks, forcing the group to scramble over craggy patches and wade through shallow spots several times before they can reach the cove. It takes them twice as long (the better part of an hour) to cover the distance on foot at high tide, and the characters encounter a hungry hippogriff about halfway along the route (combat movement speeds are halved and each round of combat, characters must roll under their Dexterity score on a d20 to avoid slipping and falling on the wet rocks).

Hippogriff (1): AC 5; MV 18″/36″; HD 3+3; hp 15; #AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-10.

If they choose to go by boat, the characters need to be careful when moving into the cove. Waves crash against the steep bluffs, and several jagged shards of stone jut up around the entrance. A rowboat or similar craft piloted by a character with an appropriate secondary skill (fisher, navigator, sailor) can pass through the rocks unhindered. Anyone else must roll under either their Strength or Dexterity (whichever is most advantageous) on a d20 to maneuver successfully through the barrier. If the check fails, the boat slams against the rocks and takes 1d4 points of hull damage (1 means it's still seaworthy, 2-3 means repairs must be made before it is seaworthy again, and 4 points means the boat is destroyed and supplies placed in the boat might be lost). Past the mouth of the cove, the waters are much calmer.

Sea Caves

Begin this part of the adventure after the characters get through the mouth of the cove. The read-aloud descriptions assume that the characters are approaching from the sea, at low tide, during daylight hours. Adjust the text as necessary for differences in conditions or direction as noted above.

1. Cove Entrance

> The crashing waves and jutting rocks give way to a small cove sheltered by sharply rising bluffs where sea birds scream and circle, defending their nests. A narrow stretch of sand bar protects a tidal pool beyond, its turquoise waters glittering in the sunlight.

The sandbar is only a few feet above sea level at low tide, submerging as the tide rises. If the characters arrive on foot, they can walk across the sandbar during low tide but must wade or swim into the cove at higher tide levels. If they come in a rowboat, they must drag the craft across the sand at low tide if they wish to use it in the cove (if they leave the craft beached on the sandbar, the sea carries it away when the tide rises). At higher tides, when the sand bar is submerged, the characters can row directly into the cove. In either case, as the characters are crossing the bar, giant crabs scuttle from hiding places in the rocks on either side and attack, surprising the group on a result of 1-4 on the surprise roll.

Giant Crabs (4): AC 3; MV 9″; HD 3; hp 12 each; #AT 2; D 2-8/2-8; SA surprise on 1-4 on 1d6.

2. First Tidal Pool

> The clear waters of the tidal pool reveal alabaster sands below the shimmering surface, where a myriad of life and color stretches in every direction. Coral in shades of white, red, purple, and salmon provide shelter to schools of tropical fish that drift and mingle with the gently wafting fronds of seaweed and anemones. To the left, a magnificent, multistaged waterfall tumbles down the wall of the cliff face, its misty spray scattering the sunlight in a rainbow. To the right, a low undercut is visible at the base of the sides of the cove.

The rocky sides of the cove rise steeply for several hundred feet from the edges of the pool, so little dry land is flat enough for the characters to walk on, even at low tide. They can, however, wade and swim near the shore and work their way around the perimeter.

The waterfall is more than 100 feet high, but it is not fed by surface water and therefore does not spill over from the top of the cliff. Instead, it emerges from a gouge in the cliff face, fed by subterranean sources. From sea level, the gouge cannot be seen, but characters who spend a little while carefully watching spot hippogriffs taking flight or returning, giving some clue as to what is up there (see area 4).

An undercut along the back right side of the cove is a tunnel through the rock that leads to a second tidal pool (area 6). At low tide, the underside of the undercut sits about 3 feet above the surface of the cove and is visible. If the characters arrived by boat and are using it to explore, there is enough room to maneuver the craft beneath the undercut at low tide, but characters must duck under the low clearance.

At higher tides, the undercut is submerged, though close inspection reveals distorted sunlight shining through from the back side of the shadowy murk. If the characters want to reach the second tidal pool at this time, they must swim.

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3. Strangle Weed Bed

A bed of seaweed wafts lazily in the currents, plainly visible in the clear water 20 feet below the surface. Sunlight flickers and glimmers upon the white sand, distorted by the water and reflected back in a dazzling array of colors. Large, disembodied eyes drift among the strands of plant life.

The disembodied eyes are floating eyes. A patch of strangle weed also grows here, mixed in with and hidden by the rest of the seaweed. The floating eyes and strangle weeds have a symbiotic relationship; the floating eyes hypnotize other fish that swim into the vicinity and then feast on the remains after the strangle weeds attack and devour them. In turn, the strangle weeds, with bestial intelligence, do not bother the floating eyes.

Observers looking down to the bottom of the pool are affected by the floating eyes' gaze attacks. For any character in a boat who fails his or her saving throw, there is a chance (10 percent × number of points the save fails by) he or she falls overboard and sinks within reach of the strangle weed. Those who resist the hypnotic effects of the floating eyes and spend at least 1 turn watching the area notice the plants grab larger fish as they become hypnotized by the floating eyes.

Floating Eyes (3): AC 9; MV 30″; HD 1–4 hit points; hp 2 each; #AT nil; SA hypnotism, save vs. paralyzation or remain stationary.

Strangle Weed Fronds (3): AC 6; MV nil (7 feet long); HD 2; hp 8 each; #AT 1; D special; SA each frond has Strength of 8 (on a hit, compare the total of the Strength scores of all entangling fronds with victim's Strength score; difference in favor of victim × 10 is the percent chance of breaking free; difference in favor of weed indicates number of points of damage; see *Monster Manual* for more explanation).

The flashing light and colors are a result of the sun shining off of metallic odds and ends, equipment and coins half-buried in the sand, treasures belonging to previous victims. If the characters spend 3 turns searching underwater through the sand in the vicinity, they find 15 cp, 9 sp, 9 ep, 6 gp, 2 pp, several unremarkable and highly corroded bits of weapons and armor, and four gems worth 100 gp each (amber, alexandrite, jet, and tourmaline).

4. Waterfall

The rocks all around the waterfall are damp and slick with moss and slime, although vines growing from the rock can be used as ropes. If a thief wishes to attempt the climb without aid (either the vines or some sort of magic), then his or her chances are one-quarter normal to succeed. Using the vines automatically succeeds, though there is a 1 in 10 chance that the vines break free at some point (roll another d10 to determine 10s of feet of falling distance).

As long as the characters remain down in the cove, the hippogriffs ignore them. If a character climbs more than halfway up, 1d4 of the creatures attack the intruder from the air. The remainder attack from the gouge, if a character climbs that far. The gouge is cut horizontally, creating a flat platform about 20 feet from front to back and twice that wide, where the creatures' nests sit among the rocks. The four nests contain six eggs and three fledglings.

Hippogriffs (7 adults): AC 5; MV 18″/36″; HD 3+3; hp 15 each; #AT 3; D 1-6/1-6/1-10.

The water flows out from a narrow, slanted crevice in the rock at the back of the gouge. It is possible for the characters to slip inside it, moving single file.

5. Stream Passage

The narrow crack continues back into darkness, and the roar of the water emerging from it echoes loudly within. The gap is narrow but tall, so the only way to advance through the passage is single file, but plenty of handholds protrude from the walls and ceiling.

This is the first opening that leads into the system of caverns connecting to the villa where Mikaro has hidden the escaped slaves. The characters can follow the crevice all the way to area 14.

Water flowing out has considerable force behind it and runs about 3 feet in depth. Each character trying to push against the current must roll lower than his or her Strength score on 1d20 to make progress unaided. Failure by more than 5 means the character has slipped and fallen and is being pushed back out of the crevice. Small characters are almost submerged, so they treat their Strength as 4 points lower.

About halfway along the route, a section of tunnel ceiling dips below the level of the water for about 10 feet. In this place, everyone has to submerge to fight the current, lowering Strength just as Small characters must during the whole trip.

6. Second Tidal Pool

The far side of the undercut emerges into a second tidal pool, with water just as clear and sea life just as colorful. The sides of this hidden grotto rise even more steeply than the first, causing the majority of the pool to remain in shaded seclusion during all but midday.

This pool is similar in most respects to the first tidal pool, with just as many fish and prevalent coral. Along the back side of the cliff are numerous caves,

some visible on the surface, others submerged even at low tide. Most of these are either too small to explore or they peter out completely after a few feet, but two of them are more extensive.

7. False Cavern

The entrance to this chamber dips below the surface of the water, even at low tide. The ceiling sits several feet above high tide and a handful of small holes in the ceiling open to the sky, so air is ample and sunlight provides plenty of illumination during the day.

> Hazy blue sunlight filters into this uneven oval cavern from above, reflecting off the surface of the water and causing ribbons of light to dance upon the walls and ceiling. Every tiny drip and splash of the moving water echoes back, creating a tinkling cacophony. Suddenly, a louder splash erupts from the far end as something roils the surface!

The characters have disturbed the nest of a giant eel. It uncoils itself from its rocky hiding place along the back wall of the small grotto and attacks.

Giant Eel (1): AC 6; MV 9″; HD 5; hp 22; #AT 1; D 3-18.

8. Connecting Cavern

> At one small ingress into the steep side of the cove, a narrow cleft in the rock leads back and into darkness, gradually ascending. A faint trickle of water can be heard from within.

This is the other opening that leads to the system of caverns and tunnels Mikaro hopes the characters can find their way through. Before the characters can explore it, they must contend with the hidden sting ray that buried itself in the sand in the shallow water near the entrance (considered 90 percent invisible). The first character entering the cleft steps on the sting ray, which attacks once before swimming away.

Sting Ray (1): AC 7; MV 9″; HD 1; hp 5; #AT 1; D 1-3 + special; SA tail spine lash, save vs. poison or paralyzed for 5-20 turns and suffer that many additional points of damage; SD 90% invisible when buried in the sand.

The cleft gradually rises until it exits the water. A small runnel of fresh water splashes down the slimy, rocky walking surface, a good indication that this is the route leading back to the abandoned villa above. The pathway ascends at an angle of approximately 30 degrees for 90 feet before finally opening into area 9.

9. Lower Chimney

No sunlight reaches this chamber.

> The crevice leading up from the cove opens into a chimneylike chamber at least a couple of stories tall. A half-dozen boulders and heaps of scree that crumbled off the chimney walls over the centuries are tumbled across the floor. High above, several large chunks of fallen stone are precariously wedged into a narrow spot in the chute, leaving only a small crawl space into the darkness beyond. The remains of a rope ladder hang from the crawl space, but the end is well out of reach 15 feet overhead. A trickle of water tumbles down the wall from above, splashing over outcroppings and into tiny pools, creating an echoing gurgle.

The chimney was discovered long ago by pirates, who used it as a hiding place for treasure. They installed the rope ladder to make it easier to climb up to area 10. The ladder is rotten and cannot hold any weight; it rips apart at the first tug.

The wedged stones separating area 9 from area 10 look as if they could tumble loose, but they are jammed in place tight and secure. Characters can stand on them without risking a collapse.

The only other egress from the area is high overhead atop area 10. It cannot be seen from the ground. Characters must follow the water, which means either appropriate magic (such as *levitate*) or climbing.

A thief can ascend the rough but slippery walls at 12 feet per round, but at half the normal chances of success. The height of the route is 30 feet to the crawl space (see area 10). Other characters must have aid in the form of ropes and pitons to reach the top.

10. Upper Chimney

After a character gets through the crawl space where the large boulders have been wedged in place, read the following.

> The chimney chamber continues up, perhaps another 40 feet. Here, water runs down the walls on all sides and drips steadily off numerous stalactites descending from the ceiling. Wedged against one wall, covered in thick layers of slime from years of exposure to moisture, sits a rusty iron chest.

The characters must contend with one immediate danger: a small family of stirges has moved in and is nesting in the shadows at the very top of the chamber. As soon as any character emerges from the crawl space, the stirges attack.

Stirges (4): AC 8; MV 3″/18″; HD 1+1; hp 5 each; #AT 1; D 1–3; SA attack as 4-HD creature (after successful melee attack, the stirge is attached to its victim and drains 1–4 hit points each round from sucking blood; at 12 hit points, the stirge is full and flies away); SD only way to remove the stirge from a victim is to kill it.

After the stirges are defeated, the characters can investigate the chest. It was left here many years ago by pirates who never returned for the loot. There is a needle trap in the lock, but both the lock and the needle have been consumed by rust, so there is no danger of poison and a bash or two with a weapon easily opens the container.

Inside are 489 gp, six moonstones (50 gp each), a *potion of levitation,* and a scroll case with a *spider climb* scroll inside. If you wish, you can also place a treasure map to another pirate treasure inside the case.

The water emerges from a small, sloping tunnel near the top of the chimney (area 11). Conditions for climbing are the same here as in area 9.

11. Sluice Tunnel

A slow but steady flow of water trickles out of a small opening in the wall tucked behind two large stalactites, near the ceiling. There is enough room to squeeze through and crawl into the tunnel, which slopes gently upward, out of sight.

The natural passage was carved long ago by a greater flow of water than comes through currently. It continues for about 50 feet to area 12. There is only enough room for a human-sized creature to crawl on hands and knees (a Small creature could walk while hunched over). The water runs along the floor of the tunnel, filling it to a depth of about 2 inches and making the surface slick, so movement is halved. Along the last 10 feet or so of the sluice tunnel, the water bubbles up from very porous rock, and the last stretch of tunnel is dry before opening into area 12.

Troglodyte Warrens

The stream passage (area 5) and sluice tunnel (area 11) ascend into a system of caverns populated by troglodytes. Their main settlement is deeper in the tunnels beneath the hills, off-map and beyond the scope of this adventure. They come to this place to farm the various subterranean fungi that grow here. All the read-aloud descriptions are written with the assumption that the characters are following the water from the bottom of the cliffs to its source. If they are traveling in the opposite direction, adjust the text as necessary.

The waterfall at area 16 can be heard throughout the caverns; adjust the described volume level based on how close the characters are to it.

12. Mud Chamber

The tunnel emerges about 3 feet above the earthen floor of a large, round cavern filled with stalactites and stalagmites. The temperature is noticeably warmer, and a humid, earthy smell hangs in the air. Beyond the mouth of the cavern, a narrower passage leads around a turn, where a faint phosphorescent glow emanates.

The "floor" of this chamber is actually a thick, heavy mud, functioning like quicksand, although it appears firm enough to stand on (70 percent undetectable). Any character who walks into the room sinks rapidly. The depth near the sluice tunnel is approximately 7 feet, so most individuals become completely submerged in the course of 2 rounds. It is impossible to swim in the bog, so submerged characters cannot keep themselves afloat by such means. They must have assistance to pull free. Any characters who are not rescued drown.

The mud is shallower, about 2 feet deep, near the walls and toward area 13. Characters who walk in this mud have their movement halved but nothing worse.

13. Fungus Farm

This massive chamber is illuminated everywhere by the soft, blue-green glow of phosphorescent fungi. Partitioned with stalagmites, stalactites, and columns of stone, the place is a haven for mushrooms, toadstools, and countless other fungal growths. From the smallest patches of lichen to the largest mushrooms towering above the floor, every imaginable spore fills the whole uneven chamber.

This chamber serves as a food farm for the troglodytes. At the moment, none are around.

The cavern system inclines down from area 16 to area 14, and water trickles along the floor, drips from the ceiling, and accumulates in low-lying pools.

The caverns are multileveled and uneven, with shelves and slopes everywhere. The place is rough terrain for movement and combat. Obvious paths wind through and among the patches of growth. Characters who have any sort of tracking ability can easily make out troglodyte footprints in the wet soil.

There is a chance (1 in 6) each turn the characters spend here that they run into troglodyte farmers. The troglodytes might attempt to negotiate with the characters (see area 16).

Troglodytes (2-5): AC 5; MV 12″; HD 2; hp 7 each; #AT 3 or 1; D 1-3/1-3/2-5 or 1-8 (stone battle axe) or 1-6 (stone javelin); SA revulsion stench (succeed on a save vs. poison or lose 1 Strength point per round for 1-6 rounds; effect is cumulative and lasts 10 melee rounds after final exposure); SD chameleon power, surprise on 1-4 unless angry and secreting stench, can also use to hide.

There is also a 25% chance that a band of troglodytes comes from other areas to check on sounds of disturbances or combat (similar numbers and armaments as listed above). It takes them 3 rounds to arrive after the noise begins.

14. Shrieker Patch

An old mound of rotting matter has sprouted a very large and strange variant of the shrieker fungus. Unlike most shriekers, this one does not react to light, due to the phosphorescent glow surrounding it. Its defensive recourse is not a shriek, but rather an almost subsonic vibration, which attracts the attention of giant insects that have been nesting in the rotting matter of the mound.

> One particularly large, violet mushroom-shaped fungus sits atop a damp and peaty-smelling mound. Its massive cap is covered in hollow openings. Suddenly the entire thing begins to quiver, and a low vibration fills the air. A moment later, hordes of giant insects begin swarming out of the rotted material of the mound!

On the first round, the following creatures emerge and attack: 1-3 giant warrior ants, 1-4 fire beetles, and 1-2 giant centipedes. On each round thereafter that the shrieker continues its vibrations, a similar number of each kind of insect appears and attacks. After the shrieker is slain or otherwise silenced, no more giant insects emerge.

Shrieker (1): AC 7; MV 1″; HD 3; hp 20; #AT 0; SD noise (subsonic).

Giant Ant Warriors (1-3/round): AC 3; MV 18″; HD 3; hp 12 each; #AT 1; D 2-8; SA sting, save vs. poison, if successful suffer 1-4 hit points of damage, if the save fails, suffer 3-12 hit points of damage.

Giant Beetles (1-4/round): AC 4; MV 12″; HD 1+2; hp 6 each; #AT 1; D 2-8.

Giant Centipedes (1-2/round): AC 9; MV 15″; HD ¼; hp 2 each; #AT 1; D nil; SA poison (save at +4 or die; the centipede makes all saving throws with a -1 penalty).

15. Dead Troglodyte

> Tucked away in a secluded corner of the passage, hidden among the various fungus growths, lies the body of a reptilian creature with a fanned crest running the length of its elongated head. It has been impaled upon a stalagmite, and its scaled skin glistens, slick with dark blood. A single stone javelin lies near its outstretched, clawed hand.

This troglodyte strayed off by itself and got caught by surprise by a family of piercers nesting in the shadows overhead. The "stalagmite" is not a stalagmite at all, but rather one of the deadly lurkers, which killed the troglodyte and is currently flipped upside down, feasting on the remains.

The moment anyone gets close enough to touch the dead troglodyte, more piercers drop from the ceiling, looking for a meal.

Piercers (4): AC 3; MV 1″; HD 2; hp 10 each; #AT 1; D 2-12; SA 95% likely to surprise.

A search of the dead troglodyte's body turns up a small pouch on its harness containing 20 cp, 14 sp, and three small pieces of hematite (10 gp each).

A small opening is high up on one wall (1 in 3 chance of noticing) that leads to area 18. The passage is narrow and low, requiring those who wish to traverse it to crawl on their bellies. It does, however, lead to a good vantage point to see the lizard skulking in the shadows in area 18.

16. Waterfall

At this end of the great cavern, water tumbles out of a spot high on the wall and cascades down with a roar to splash into a large pool. Several large bins have been erected around the edge of the water. They are constructed from long, thin mushroom stalks woven together with tough, woody roots for the walls, and are filled with lumps of fungus. A crude two-wheeled cart made from dried mushroom stalk "planks" and mushroom cap "wheels" has been parked near one of the bins, half-laden with dirt or compost.

This is the storage area for the farm, where the troglodytes put their harvested food to keep until they are ready to haul it away to where the rest of their tribe dwells. The cart is loaded with fertilizer from the lizard pens (area 18).

Two rounds after the characters arrive, a band of nine troglodytes and their leader reveal themselves. They have used their chameleon power and the noise from the waterfall to attempt to remain undetected while they slip into position. Assuming they are not spotted beforehand, the leader reveals himself and tries to use sign language and crude Common to indicate that he wishes to negotiate.

He attempts to convince the adventurers to help the troglodytes get rid of a "water demon" that has taken up residence in the pool. If the characters agree and defeat the water weird, the troglodytes make peace with them, which should come in handy later when the characters lead Mikaro and his band of escaped slaves back through here.

If the characters reject the negotiations or attack, the troglodytes become violent. After half their number is killed, they flee, heading up the tunnel toward their tribe (area 17). If they escape, a horde of forty troglodytes returns 6 hours later to deal with the intruders.

Water Weird (1): AC 4; MV 12″; HD 3+3; hp 16; #AT 0; D nil; SA strikes as a 6-HD monster (any creature struck is dragged into the water unless it rolls a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation); SD sharp weapons inflict only 1 hit point of damage; damage equal to its hit points disrupts the water weird but it reforms in 2 melee rounds; cold magic slows it; fire spells do half or no damage; a *purify water* spell instantly kills it; all other attacks cause no harm.

Troglodytes (9): AC 5; MV 12″; HD 2; hp 7 each; #AT 3 or 1; D 1-3/1-3/2-5 or 1-6 (stone javelin); SA revulsion stench (succeed on a save vs. poison or lose 1 Strength point per round for 1-6 rounds; effect is cumulative and lasts 10 melee rounds after final exposure); SD chameleon power, surprise on 1-4 unless angry and secreting stench, can also use to hide.

Troglodyte Leader (1): AC 5; MV 12″; HD 3; hp 17; #AT 3 or 1; D 1-3/1-3/2-5 or 1-8 (stone battleaxe); SA revulsion stench (succeed on a save vs. poison or lose 1 Strength point per round for 1-6 rounds; effect is cumulative and lasts 10 melee rounds after final exposure); SD chameleon power, surprise on 1-4 unless angry and secreting stench, can also use to hide.

The leader wears a copper and gold armband (300 gp). A small stoneware cask buried in the pile of lizard-dung fertilizer on the cart contains 232 cp, 647 sp, and 7 eye agates (10 gp each).

The water from the sewers splits (see area 19), most of it becoming this waterfall and pool and flowing through the rest of the caverns, but it is not the route for the characters to follow upward. If the players have their characters explore the source of the waterfall, describe how the water jets out of the hole and sprays into the pool. There is no way to work upstream from here without drowning.

17. Wrong Way

As this passageway leads away from the great fungus cavern, the surroundings immediately become much drier. The rock floor here is mostly flat and has been worn smooth, as if from having been trod upon by countless feet over many years. The tunnel stretches away as far as the illumination can reveal, first rising for a bit and then descending steadily into oppressive darkness.

This route leads to the troglodyte tribe's caverns and to much more besides. Beyond the edge of the map, it continues for several miles, with numerous smaller side passages and chambers. The characters should quickly get the idea that this path leads away from the water they are supposed to be following. If they insist on continuing to journey this way, what they find is beyond the scope of this adventure. If you wish, you can create a large troglodyte lair that contains a tribe.

18. Lizard Pen

A smaller stream meanders out from the mouth of this cavern, which has been barred by a series of dried, root-reinforced fungus stalks woven together to form a cage wall and door. A pungent odor wafts from the large chamber beyond, which is softly lit by more glowing fungus.

The troglodytes have captured and partially tamed a subterranean lizard here, enclosing it in this cavern through the construction of the cage wall at the entrance. They keep the creature fed with fresh meat and harvest its droppings for use as fertilizer. It's not completely domesticated, though, and "trained" only means that it doesn't immediately pounce when the troglodytes enter. The lizard is used to the troglodytes tossing meat to one side of the cage and, while it eats, quickly gathering up the waste on the far side.

If any characters hide and watch, in 1 turn a group of troglodytes arrives and does exactly as described. If the characters have established a peace with the troglodytes before coming here, they can aid the characters in getting to the crevice by distracting the lizard with food.

Otherwise, when the characters first enter the chamber, the lizard is near the western wall. In the first round, it scrambles down and waits, expecting food. One round later, realizing the characters are not its troglodyte handlers, it rushes forward and attacks.

Subterranean Lizard (1): AC 5; MV 12″; HD 6; hp 28; #AT 1; D 2-12; SA inflicts double damage on a natural 20 attack roll.

Once the lizard is slain, the characters can explore the chamber more thoroughly. The first thing they notice is the smaller amount of water trickling out of a crevice higher up the wall near the back of the cavern. The opening sits about 15 feet above floor level and is small enough that only human-sized and smaller creatures can wriggle into it (the lizard was too large). This passage leads to the back side of the waterfall (area 19).

19. Behind the Waterfall

About 10 feet or so in, the crevice opens to the back side of the waterfall (area 16). Read the following aloud when a character investigates:

A torrent of water rushes down and past the end of the crevice, blocking the way. Most of the cascade disappears, flowing elsewhere, but a wedge of rock diverts a small amount into the crevice where you stand and continues on into the lizard cavern. There might be a way to squeeze past the rushing torrent.

The crevice continues past the waterfall, and a small ledge just large enough for a single character to stand on runs along the wall opposite the cascade. It's possible for characters to side-step along the ledge and pass the waterfall to continue through the narrow tunnel beyond. This tunnel leads up a steep, collapsed stone staircase to area 20.

Sewers and Basement

This region of the underground route consists of old and forgotten structures, remnants of a time when the town of Highport was still under human control. Because both ends of this particular section of tunnel are blocked by cave-ins, there is no known entrance to these tunnels, so they haven't been explored by any of the surface inhabitants in quite a long time.

As with the other sections of the dungeon, all of the read-aloud texts are written with the assumption that the characters are traveling up toward the abandoned villa from the sea caves. If they have reversed course for their explorations for some reason, make the appropriate adjustments to the material.

20. Collapsed Staircase

The crevice runs straight, slowly rising, for perhaps 80 feet. At that point, it is almost completely blocked by what appears to be an old but intact stone staircase that has dropped from above. A yawning area of darkness is obvious overhead.

The stairs once led up out of a cellar, but time and shifts in the earth caused them to tumble down through the floor of the cellar and into the crevice. Climbing the steep and canted steps is not hard, even for non-thief characters.

21. Abandoned Cellar

The entirety of this room, formed from large blocks of smoothly dressed stone, sags precariously, the floor sloped downward toward the cracked and broken hole where the stairs once sat. Its walls are twisted out of square and the ceiling droops in the middle. High along one wall, where the stairs once rose to a doorway, is now only a brick-filled archway. A second opening sits low in the opposite wall, an arch a couple of feet in height filled with rusted iron bars. In one corner is a large, bright yellow mound. It faintly resembles a stack of very old and rotting crates, barrels, and chests nestled against collapsed shelving.

This ancient cellar has sunk and settled over the years, weighted down from newer structures built atop it. The bricked-in arch has tons more stone and

soil behind it, and the solid sounds generated from tapping on the surface should make that clear. The low arch with the bars leads into the sewers at area 22. The bars themselves are in such poor shape that a few good kicks or smacks with a blunt weapon knocks them free.

The far more immediate danger is the patch of yellow mold in the corner. This stuff has grown to completely cover the abandoned food and other supplies left here when the cellar was sealed. Anyone who moves within a few feet to examine it can tell that it is some type of fungus.

Yellow Mold (1 patch): AC 9; MV 0″; HD –; hp –; #AT 1; D 1-8; SA poison spores (if the mold is contacted roughly, 50% chance of it releasing its enzymes in a 10-ft-cubed cloud; all within must save vs. poison or die).

If the characters somehow find a way to dispatch the yellow mold and search through the stored goods, most of it quickly disintegrates into rotted powder. However, a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment* and a scroll with *burning hands* inscribed on it and slipped inside an ivory and silver scroll case (30 gp) were tucked into one of the crates and forgotten.

22. Hidden Sewer

This ancient sewer is a vaulted passageway of crumbling brick and stone. A variety of molds and slimes in a multitude of colors cover the floors, walls, and ceilings. A ledge, 5 feet wide, runs alongside a channel of flowing water, the surface of which flows about a foot or so below the level of the walkway. The water looks clean.

The water flows rapidly through this area, which is why the flow is not foul. The depth of the water at any given point varies from 5-12 (1d8 + 4) feet.

23. Deadly Ceiling

Along this stretch of the sewer tunnel, the ceiling is free of mold and the exposed stone glistens with moisture. A steady drip of water falls from many points along this bare spot, like droplets from the tree branches after a rain.

The glistening is much more than water. An ochre jelly seeped into the tunnel from above, affixed itself to the ceiling, and has been dining on the fungi that grow here. Any character who walks through the dripping suffers the flesh-dissolving effects of the ochre jelly on a lesser scale (1-3 hit points of damage per round standing beneath the creature). If a character remains beneath the dripping for more than 2 consecutive rounds, the ochre jelly drops on that character and attacks.

Ochre Jelly (1): AC 8; MV 3″; HD 6; hp 25; #AT 1; D 3-12; SD lightning bolts divide the creature into two smaller creatures with equal hit points that inflict half normal damage.

24. Swirling Drain

At this point in the sewer, the water swirls and vanishes into some unseen drain below the surface. The current looks strong.

This is the point at which the water in the sewer disappears and becomes the waterfall (areas 16 and 19). Any character foolish enough to jump into the water is quickly sucked in by the current. Even characters that are tethered by rope to others standing on the ledge are in danger from the drain, with a combined Strength of 35 needed to haul one free. Characters that are sucked into the drain get pulled down for 15 or so feet and then become wedged in the passage.

25. Collapsed Wall

A section of the tunnel wall has tumbled down, revealing a large, flooded chamber beyond. Several stone structures protrude from the water's surface, like a giant's toy blocks dropped into a basin.

The collapse breached the side of an ancient burial vault. The stone, blocklike structures are the tops of a number of individual mausoleums within the larger vault. From this vantage point, it is impossible to tell how large the vault is or how deep the water is.

26. Burial Vault

A number of stone columns fill this vast chamber, supporting the vaulted ceiling overhead. A dozen mausoleums, mostly submerged in the murky water, create a pattern of exposed platforms that stretches as far as you can see.

This ancient burial chamber was once part of a villa within Highport, the residents of which honored Zilchus. The water now fills the chamber to 7 feet, leaving about 8 feet to the ceiling above.

The family buried here suffered a curse, and so undead linger in the vault. Once any character is halfway across the room, undead attack, with the skeletons climbing from the water all around or grappling swimming characters from the depths. The wraith flies in and out of the shadows to make hit-and-run attacks. Skeletons use superior numbers to

grapple and overbear, dragging victims down into the water to drown.

Skeletons (15): AC 7; MV 12″; HD 1; hp 5 each; #AT 1; D 1–6; SD half damage from sharp/edged weapons; immune to sleep, charm, hold, and cold-based spells; holy water deals 2–8 hit points of damage.

Wraith (1): AC 4; MV 12″/24″; HD 5+3; hp 23; #AT 1; D 1–6; SA energy drain; SD only struck by silver (half damage) or magical weapons (full damage); unaffected by sleep, charm, hold, cold-based spells, poison, or paralysis; holy water inflicts 2–8 hit points of damage.

A stone staircase leads to an alcove and a stone door that is barred from the other side. Any sort of knocking or sufficient noise near the door rouses a pair of Mikaro's slave refugees in 5 rounds.

The refugees are prepared with clubs and crude spears to fend off any attacks. After they see that the characters are neither dangerous creatures nor slavers, they cautiously stand down, hoping that the characters are the rescue Mikaro promised them.

Concluding the Adventure

The area just beyond the door is a crude basement dug out of the earth and shored up with stout planks and beams. The floor actually sits about 4 feet above the level of the door. Recent excavation uncovered the door and provided a ramp down to it.

As the characters first enter the basement, Mikaro arrives and greets them warmly, expressing his profound pleasure and relief that they made it.

> "Ah, it is you!" the cleric beams. "Our prayers have been answered. You found the route. I—we all—are so grateful for your efforts. Now, we must prepare to make the return journey, and soon. I fear those foul slavers have begun to suspect this place. I want to be gone before they break down the front door."

At this point, the adventure is effectively concluded. Mikaro quizzes the party extensively on what they found during their explorations so that he can prepare to deal with any residual dangers. He would much prefer for the characters to join him and the refugees for the return trip, both to guide them and to help defend the escaped slaves.

If the characters did not negotiate with the troglodytes, then those creatures remain a threat along the path. This conundrum can be a source of additional adventure if you wish. Set up an encounter in area 13 with a contingent of the humanoids. The characters, Mikaro, and the slaves must fight their way to freedom.

If Mikaro promised the characters a reward for their efforts, he happily pays them with no hard feelings. He offers them a chance to work with him again, helping more slaves to escape. If they agree, an entire series of daring rescues could take place, using the abandoned villa and the tunnels down to the sea caves as an underground railroad of sorts.

If the characters have come to Highport in pursuit of the slavers responsible for the looting and pillaging along the Wild Coast (as detailed in the adventure *Danger at Darkshelf Quarry*), he points them in the direction of a temple taken over by the Slave Lords (adventure module A1: *Slave Pits of the Undercity*) and tells them he believes that the source of the slaving activity can be found somewhere within.

Mikaro can become a regular source of information and aid for the characters. Conversely, he could be captured and later found as a prisoner of the slavers deeper within the A-series adventures.

About the Author

During a career that has spanned more than two decades, **Thomas M. Reid** has designed, edited, or managed over 100 published RPG products. He currently lives on a quarter-acre cat ranch in the Texas Hill Country with his wife and three sons. When he isn't busy riding herd, Thomas still plays his original Greyhawk campaign with the same group of friends he's known since junior high.

Appendix: 4th Edition Conversion

This appendix contains 4th Edition versions of the creatures in the adventure. The 4th Edition stat blocks are organized alphabetically according to the names of the AD&D creatures they replace.

AD&D Creature	4th Edition Alternative
Ant, giant	Giant ant
Beetle, giant (fire)	Fire beetle
Centipede, giant	Centipede swarm
Crab, giant	Murklord frog
Eel, giant	Blackwater serpent
Floating eye	Giant archerfish
Gnoll	Gnoll blood caller, gnoll huntmaster, deathpledged gnoll
Goblin	Goblin cutthroat, goblin hex hurler
Guard	Common bandit
Half-orc fighter	Common bandit
Hippogriff	Hippogriff
Kobold	Kobold dragonshield, kobold slinger, kobold quickblade
Merchant	Human goon
Ochre jelly	Ochre jelly
Ogre	Ogre
Orc	Orc archer, battletested orc, orc pummeler
Piercer	Darkmantle enveloper
Shrieker	Shrieker
Skeleton	Skeletal legionary
Sting ray	Ixitxachitl demon ray
Stirge	Stirge suckerling
Strangle weed	Fungal bloodthorn
Subterranean lizard	Giant lizard
Troglodyte	Troglodyte mauler, troglodyte grunt
Water weird	Water mephit
Wraith	Wraith
Yellow mold	Death mold zombie—treat as inert

Ant, Giant

Giant Ant — **Level 4 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount) — XP 175

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27 — **Initiative** +8
AC 18, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 14 — **Perception** +8
Speed 9

Traits

Skitter (mount)
While mounted by a friendly rider, when it shifts, the giant ant can shift 2 squares instead of 1 square.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 19 (+6)	**Dex** 19 (+6)	**Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 1 (-3)	**Cha** 7 (+0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Beetle, Giant (Fire)

Fire Beetle — **Level 1 Brute**
Small natural beast — XP 100

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16 — **Initiative** +1
AC 13, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 11 — **Perception** +0
Speed 6
Resist 10 fire

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 2d8 + 2 damage.

Fire Spray (fire) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +4 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d6 + 1 fire damage.

Str 14 (+2)	**Dex** 12 (+1)	**Wis** 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	**Int** 1 (-5)	**Cha** 8 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Centipede, Giant

Centipede Swarm — **Level 2 Brute**
Medium natural beast (swarm) — XP 125

HP 44; **Bloodied** 22 — **Initiative** +4
AC 14, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12 — **Perception** +1
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb) — Darkvision
Resist half-damage against melee and ranged attacks;
Vulnerable 10 against area and close attacks.

Traits

Swarm Attack ✦ **Aura** 1
Each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 3 damage plus 2 extra damage per additional centipede swarm adjacent to the enemy.

Swarm
The swarm can occupy the same space as another creature, and an enemy can enter its space, which is difficult terrain. The swarm cannot be pulled, pushed, or slid by melee or ranged attacks. It can squeeze through any opening that is large enough for at least one of the creatures it comprises.

Standard Actions

Swarm of Mandibles ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 damage plus 1 extra damage for each additional centipede swarm adjacent to the target, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). A creature already taking ongoing poison damage is also weakened (save ends).

Skills Stealth +9

Str 9 (+0)	**Dex** 17 (+4)	**Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	**Int** 1 (-4)	**Cha** 6 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Crab, Giant

Murklord Frog	**Level 2 Skirmisher**
Medium natural beast (aquatic)	XP 125
HP 39; **Bloodied** 19	**Initiative** +7
AC 16, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13	**Perception** +4
Speed 6, swim 6	Low-light vision

Traits

Aquatic

The murklord can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 1d12 + 5 while the murklord is bloodied.

Leapfrog ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⚅ ⚃

Effect: The murklord shifts 3 squares, makes the following attack, and shifts 3 squares again.

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, or 2d12 + 4 while the murklord is bloodied.

Minor Actions

Tongue Lash ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: The murklord slides the target 1 square.

Skills Acrobatics +10

Str 16 (+4)	**Dex** 18 (+5)	**Wis** 16 (+4)
Con 15 (+3)	**Int** 4 (-2)	**Cha** 8 (+0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Eel, Giant

Blackwater Serpent	**Level 3 Brute**
Large natural beast (aquatic)	XP 150
HP 53; **Bloodied** 26	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14	**Perception** +2
Speed 5, swim 10	

Traits

Aquatic

The serpent can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Bite (poison) **✦ At-Will**

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 1d8 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Triggered Actions

Tail Slap ✦ Encounter

Trigger: An enemy within 2 squares of the serpent hits it with an attack.

Attack (Immediate Reaction): Melee 2 (one creature); +8 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage.

Str 17 (+4)	**Dex** 14 (+3)	**Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	**Int** 2 (-3)	**Cha** 9 (0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Floating Eye

Giant Archerfish	**Level 4 Artillery**
Small natural beast (aquatic)	XP 175
HP 45; **Bloodied** 22	**Initiative** +6
AC 18, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14	**Perception** +7
Speed 1 (clumsy), swim 6	

Traits

Aquatic

The archerfish can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 2 damage.

Water Bullet ✦ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage, and the giant archerfish slides the target 1 square.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 10 (+2)	**Dex** 19 (+6)	**Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	**Int** 1 (-3)	**Cha** 6 (0)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Gnoll

Gnoll Blood Caller	**Level 6 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250
HP 70; **Bloodied** 35	**Initiative** +8
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 17	**Perception** +5
Speed 8	Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Attack
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.

Standard Actions

Claws ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, or 2d6 + 9 while the gnoll is bloodied.
Effect: The gnoll marks the target until the end of the gnoll's next turn.

Blood Call (charm, psychic) ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The gnoll shifts up to 3 squares.
Attack: Close burst 5 (each creature marked by the gnoll in the burst); +9 vs. Will
Hit: 1d10 + 9 psychic damage, and the gnoll pulls the target up to 3 squares.

Minor Actions

Blood Frenzy ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Requirement: The gnoll must be bloodied.
Effect: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst). Each target takes 5 damage and is marked by the gnoll until the end of the gnoll's next turn.

Str 19 (+7)	**Dex** 16 (+6)	**Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 14 (+5)	**Int** 9 (+2)	**Cha** 7 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment leather armor

Gnoll Huntmaster	**Level 5 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200
HP 50; **Bloodied** 25	**Initiative** +4
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15	**Perception** +11
Speed 8	Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Attack
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.

Standard Actions

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, or 2d6 + 5 while the gnoll is bloodied.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage, or 1d10 + 10 while the gnoll is bloodied.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 16 (+5)	**Dex** 19 (+6)	**Wis** 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 8 (+1)	**Cha** 7 (+0)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment leather armor, handaxe, longbow, 30 arrows

Deathpledged Gnoll	**Level 5 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 200
HP 74; **Bloodied** 37	**Initiative** +4
AC 18, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16	**Perception** +4
Speed 8	Low-light vision

Traits

Pack Attack
The gnoll's attacks deal 5 extra damage to any enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.

Standard Actions

Longspear (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 9 damage, or 2d6 + 11 while the gnoll is bloodied.

Triggered Actions

Claws of Yeenoghu (healing)
Trigger: The gnoll first drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (No Action): The gnoll regains 5 hit points, gains 1 action point, and gains resist 15 to all damage. At the end of its next turn, the gnoll drops to 0 hit points.

Str 18 (+6)	**Dex** 15 (+4)	**Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	**Int** 9 (+1)	**Cha** 7 (+0)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common
Equipment leather armor, light shield, longspear

Goblin

Goblin Cutthroat **Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid XP 100

HP 30; **Bloodied** 15 **Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13 **Perception** +2
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Short Sword ✦ At-Will
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage, or 2d6 + 5 if the goblin has combat advantage against the target. In addition, the goblin can shift 1 square.

Dagger ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage.

Move Actions

Deft Scurry ✦ At-Will
Effect: The goblin shifts up to 3 squares.

Triggered Actions

Goblin Tactics ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.

Skills Stealth +8, Thievery +8
Str 13 (+1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 14 (+2)
Con 14 (+2) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword, 2 daggers

Goblin Hex Hurler **Level 3 Controller (Leader)**
Small natural humanoid XP 150

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23 **Initiative** +3
AC 17, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16 **Perception** +2
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Staff (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 7 damage, and the goblin can slide the target 1 square.

Blinding Hex ✦ At-Will
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the goblin's next turn.

Stinging Hex ✦ Recharge ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Will
Hit: The target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).

Vexing Cloud (zone) **✦ Encounter**
Effect: Area burst 3 within 10. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the goblin's next turn. Enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the zone.
Sustain Minor: The zone persists until the end of the goblin's next turn, and the goblin can move it up to 5 squares.

Triggered Actions

Goblin Tactics ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The goblin is missed by a melee attack.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The goblin shifts 1 square.

Lead from the Rear ✦ At-Will
Trigger: An enemy hits the goblin with a ranged attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The goblin can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of the goblin's level or lower.

Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10
Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 18 (+5)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Equipment leather robes, staff

Guard and Half-Orc Fighter

Common Bandit **Level 2 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 125

HP 37; **Bloodied** 18 **Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12 **Perception** +1
Speed 6

Traits

Combat Advantage
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Standard Actions

Mace (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the bandit can shift 1 square.

Dagger (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 5 damage, and the bandit can shift 1 square.

Dazing Strike (weapon) **✦ Recharge** when the attack misses
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn.
Effect: The bandit can shift 1 square.

Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9
Str 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+2)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common
Equipment leather armor, mace, 4 daggers

Hippogriff

Hippogriff **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Large natural beast (mount) XP 200

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32 **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15 **Perception** +8
Speed 4, fly 10

Traits

Aerial Agility
While the hippogriff is flying, its rider gains a +1 bonus to all defenses.

Standard Actions

Bite ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Diving Overrun ✦ **At-Will**
Requirement: The hippogriff must be flying.
Effect: The hippogriff charges a Medium or smaller enemy and makes the following attack instead of a melee basic attack. After attacking, the hippogriff lands in an unoccupied space adjacent to the target.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target falls prone.

Flyby Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The hippogriff flies up to its fly speed and uses bite once during that movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

Str 19 (+6) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+3)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 2 (-2) **Cha** 6 (0)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common

Kobold

Kobold Dragonshield **Level 2 Soldier**
Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 125

HP 36; **Bloodied** 18 **Initiative** +4
AC 18, **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 13 **Perception** +2
Speed 5 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Short Sword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.
Effect: The kobold marks the target until the end of the kobold's next turn.

Dirty Tactics (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the kobold's next turn.
Miss: Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the kobold's next turn.

Minor Actions

Shifty ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The kobold shifts 1 square.

Triggered Actions

Dragonshield Tactics ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An enemy adjacent to the kobold shifts or an enemy moves to a square adjacent to the kobold.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The kobold shifts 1 square.

Skills Athletics +8, Stealth +7, Thievery +7
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 13 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+2)
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 10 (+1)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Equipment scale armor, light shield, short sword

Kobold Slinger **Level 1 Artillery**
Small natural humanoid (reptile) XP 100

HP 24; **Bloodied** 12 **Initiative** +3
AC 13, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12 **Perception** +1
Speed 6 Darkvision

Standard Actions

Dagger (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d4 + 3 damage.

Sling (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Special Shot (weapon) ✦ **At-Will** (3/encounter)
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage plus one of the following effects (roll a d6):
⚀ ⚁ *Stinkpot:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).
⚂ ⚃ *Firepot* (fire): The target takes ongoing 2 fire damage (save ends).
⚄ ⚅ *Gluepot:* The target is immobilized (save ends).

Minor Action

Shifty ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The kobold shifts 1 square.

Skills Stealth +8
Str 9 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 12 (+1) **Int** 9 (-1) **Cha** 10 (+0)
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic
Equipment leather armor, dagger, sling, 20 sling bullets, 3 rounds of special shot

Merchant

Kobold Quickblade	**Level 1 Skirmisher**
Small natural humanoid (reptile)	XP 100
HP 29; **Bloodied** 14	**Initiative** +5
AC 15, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12	**Perception** +1
Speed 6	Darkvision
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Short Sword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 3 damage. The attack deals 2 extra damage per square the kobold has shifted since the start of its turn.	
Move Actions	
Fleet Feet ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The kobold shifts up to 3 squares.	
Minor Actions	
Shifty ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The kobold shifts 1 square.	
Skills Athletics +4, Stealth +8, Thievery +8	
Str 8 (-1) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+1)	
Con 13 (+1) **Int** 9 (-1) **Cha** 10 (+0)	
Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic	
Equipment leather armor, light shield, short sword	

Human Goon	**Level 2 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 31
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	**Initiative** +3
AC 15, **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 11, **Will** 11	**Perception** +2
Speed 6	
Traits	
Mob Rule	
While at least two other human goons are within 5 squares of the goon, it gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Club** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 5 damage.	
Str 14 (+3) **Dex** 11 (+1) **Wis** 12 (+2)	
Con 12 (+2) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 13 (+2)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common	
Equipment club	

Ochre Jelly

Ochre Jelly	**Level 3 Elite Brute**
Large natural beast (blind, ooze)	XP 300
HP 102; **Bloodied** 51	**Initiative** +0
AC 15, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 14	**Perception** +2
Speed 4, climb 4	Blindsight
Immune blinded, gaze effects; **Resist** 5 acid	
Saving Throws +2; **Action Points** 1	
Traits	
Ooze	
While squeezing, the ooze moves at full speed rather than half speed, it doesn't take the -5 penalty to attack rolls, and it doesn't grant combat advantage for squeezing.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** (acid) ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).	
Move Actions	
Flowing Form ✦ **At-Will**	
Effect: The ochre jelly shifts up to 4 squares.	
Triggered Actions	
Split ✦ **Encounter**	
Trigger: The ochre jelly becomes bloodied.	
Effect (No Action): The jelly splits into two creatures, each with hit points equal to one-half its current hit points. Effects on the original ochre jelly do not apply to the second one.	
Str 13 (+2) **Dex** 8 (+0) **Wis** 12 (+2)	
Con 11 (+1) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 1 (-4)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

Ogre

Ogre **Level 6 Brute**
Large natural humanoid (giant) XP 250

HP 90; **Bloodied** 45 **Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16 **Perception** +3
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⨁ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d10 + 6 damage.

Rock (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.

Grand Slam (weapon) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 4d10 + 4 damage, and the ogre pushes the target up to 2 squares and knocks it prone.
Miss: Half damage, and the target falls prone.

Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 11 (+3)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 6 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 4 rocks

Orc

Orc Archer **Level 4 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 175

HP 42; **Bloodied** 21 **Initiative** +6
AC 16, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14 **Perception** +2
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⨁ **Handaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 6 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage, and the orc can push the target 1 square.

Clustered Volley (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Area burst 1 within 20 (creatures in the burst); +9 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 6 damage.

Triggered Actions

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 15 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment leather armor, handaxe, longbow, 30 arrows

Battletested Orc **Level 3 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid XP 150

HP 50; **Bloodied** 25 **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13 **Perception** +1
Speed 6 (8 when charging) Low-light vision

Standard Actions

⨁ **Battleaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, or 1d10 + 10 with a charge attack.

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage.

Hacking Frenzy (weapon) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 5 damage, and the orc marks the target until the end of the orc's next turn.
Effect: The orc grants combat advantage until the start of its next turn.

Triggered Actions

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 18 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 10 (+1)
Con 18 (+5) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 9 (+0)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, battleaxe, 4 handaxes

Orc Pummeler	**Level 6 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250
HP 76; **Bloodied** 38	**Initiative** +5
AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16	**Perception** +3
Speed 6	Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Stone Maul (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage, and the target falls prone.

Earthshaking Slam ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the orc's next turn.
Effect: The orc pushes each target up to 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

Intercepting Swat ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚄ ⚅
Trigger: An enemy makes an opportunity attack against the orc.
Effect (Free Action): The orc uses *stone maul* against the triggering enemy.

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 21 (+8)	**Dex** 14 (+5)	**Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 20 (+8)	**Int** 8 (+2)	**Cha** 8 (+2)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment scale armor, stone maul

Piercer

Darkmantle Enveloper	**Level 8 Lurker**
Large shadow magical beast	XP 350
HP 76; **Bloodied** 38	**Initiative** +12
AC 22, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19	**Perception** +7
Speed 2, climb 2 (spider climb), fly 6	Blindsight 8,
Vulnerable 5 radiant	Darkvision

Traits

Shadowy Field ✦ **Aura** 5
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light. If the darkmantle takes radiant damage, this aura deactivates until the end of the darkmantle's next turn.

Standard Actions

Tentacle Lash ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage.

Engulf ✦ **Recharge** when the darkmantle has no creature grabbed
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 8 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 16) and blinded until the grab ends.
Sustain Minor: The darkmantle sustains the grab, and the target takes 5 damage.

Minor Actions

Shadowcry (thunder) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d4 + 5 thunder damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the darkmantle's next turn.

Triggered Actions

Darkjump (teleportation) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Trigger: The darkmantle takes damage.
Effect (Immediate Reaction): The darkmantle teleports up to 6 squares to a space that is in darkness or dim light. Until the start of its next turn, the darkmantle becomes invisible and its *shadowy field* is deactivated.

Skills Stealth +13

Str 19 (+8)	**Dex** 19 (+8)	**Wis** 16 (+7)
Con 20 (+9)	**Int** 3 (+0)	**Cha** 5 (+1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Shrieker

Shrieker	**Level 4 Lurker**
Medium natural beast (blind, plant)	XP 175
HP 40; **Bloodied** 20	**Initiative** +3
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15	**Perception** +2
Speed 1 (cannot shift or run)	Blindsight 5
Immune blinded, charm, gaze, illusion, poison	

Traits

Plant Form
Until the shrieker takes an action, a creature must succeed on a DC 21 Dungeoneering or Nature check to recognize the shrieker is a creature.

Standard Actions

Shriek (thunder) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Close burst 2 (nonplant creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d6 + 2 thunder damage.

Triggered Actions

Shrieking Alarm ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: A nonplant creature ends its turn within 5 squares of the shrieker without succeeding on a DC 14 Stealth check.
Effect (Free Action): The shrieker emits a loud shriek that can be heard by all nondeafened creatures within 20 squares of it.

Str 4 (-1)	**Dex** 5 (-1)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 10 (+2)	**Int** 1 (-3)	**Cha** 1 (-3)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Skeleton

Skeletal Legionary **Level 7 Minion Soldier**
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 75

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +9
AC 23, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18 **Perception** +5
Speed 5 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Standard Actions

⨁ **Longsword** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.
Effect: The legionary marks the target until the end of the legionary's next turn.

⨁ **Javelin** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.
Effect: The legionary marks the target until the end of the legionary's next turn.

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 3 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, longsword, 3 javelins

Sting Ray

Ixitxachitl Demon Ray **Level 3 Skirmisher**
Medium elemental magical beast (aquatic, demon) XP 150

HP 45; **Bloodied** 22 **Initiative** +7
AC 17, **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +3
Speed 0, fly 5 (hover), swim 8 Darkvision

Traits

Aquatic
The demon ray can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.
Circle the Prey Slowed creatures cannot make opportunity attacks against the demon ray.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.

Tail Barbs (poison) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 poison damage, and the target is slowed until the end of its next turn.

Skills Acrobatics +10, Athletics +9, Stealth +10
Str 16 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 15 (+3)
Con 13 (+2) **Int** 15 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

Stirge

Stirge Suckerling **Level 5 Minion Lurker**
Small natural beast XP 50

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +9
AC 19, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +7
Speed 2, fly 6 Darkvision

Traits

Nimble Bloodsucker
While the stirge has a creature grabbed, the stirge gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex.

Standard Actions

⨁ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC. While the stirge has a creature grabbed, it can use *bite* only against that creature, and it hits automatically.
Hit: 5 damage, and the stirge grabs the target (escape DC 15). Until the target is no longer grabbed by any suckerlings, it takes damage at the start of its turn equal to the number of stirge suckerlings grabbing it. The target takes this damage only once each turn, regardless of how many suckerlings are grabbing it.

Skills Stealth +10
Str 7 (+0) **Dex** 16 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 4 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Strangle Weed

Fungal Bloodthorn **Level 2 Soldier**
Large natural beast (aquatic, plant) XP 125

HP 41; **Bloodied** 20 **Initiative** +3
AC 18, **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 12, **Will** 14 **Perception** +3
Speed 5 (forest walk) Blindsight 10

Traits

Aquatic
The bloodthorn can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Striking Vine** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage.

⸸ **Impaling Thorn** (healing) ✦ **Recharge** when the bloodthorn doesn't have a creature grabbed
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +5 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d4 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13).
Sustain Standard: The target takes 2d8 + 4 damage, and the vine regains 5 hit points.

Minor Actions

Pulling Thorns ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The bloodthorn shifts 1 square, and pulls any creature grabbed by it into a space adjacent to it.

Str 17 (+4) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 14 (+3)
Con 17 (+4) **Int** 2 (-3) **Cha** 6 (-1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Subterranean Lizard

Giant Lizard **Level 7 Brute**
Large natural beast (reptile) XP 300

HP 100; **Bloodied** 50 **Initiative** +6
AC 19, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 17 **Perception** +4
Speed 9, climb 4

Standard Actions

⊕ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage.

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 2 (-1) **Cha** 7 (+1)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** –

Troglodyte

Troglodyte Mauler **Level 6 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 250

HP 74; **Bloodied** 37 **Initiative** +6
AC 22, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +5
Speed 5 Darkvision

Traits

Troglodyte Stench ✦ **Aura** 1
Living enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the aura.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 4d4 + 4 damage.
Effect: The troglodyte marks the target until the end of the troglodyte's next turn.

⊕ **Claw** ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d4 + 9 damage.

⊛ **Javelin** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

Minor Actions

⸸ **Bite** ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature granting combat advantage to the troglodyte); +9 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 4 damage. Until the end of the troglodyte's next turn, the target regains half the normal hit points from healing effects.

Skills Athletics +12, Endurance +12
Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 18 (+7) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic
Equipment greatclub, 2 javelins

Troglodyte Grunt — Level 6 Minion Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (reptile) — XP 63

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion. **Initiative** +6
AC 20, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +5
Speed 5 Darkvision

Traits

Troglodyte Stench ✦ Aura 1
Living enemies take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while in the aura.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Club** (weapon) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 7 damage.
Effect: The troglodyte shifts up to 2 squares.

Triggered Actions

Scatter ✦ At-Will
Trigger: The troglodyte is targeted by a close or an area attack.
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): The troglodyte shifts up to 2 squares to a square outside the triggering attack's area of effect.

Str 18 (+7)	**Dex** 13 (+4)	**Wis** 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	**Int** 4 (+0)	**Cha** 9 (+2)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Draconic
Equipment club

Water Weird

Water Mephit — Level 3 Controller

Small elemental humanoid (aquatic) — XP 150

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23 **Initiative** +1
AC 17, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 15 **Perception** +0
Speed 6, fly 6, swim 6
Immune acid

Traits

Regeneration
The mephit regains 5 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. When the mephit takes cold or fire damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Claws ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage.

✧ **Acid Breath** (acid, zone) **✦ Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d6 + 3 acid damage.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: The blast creates a zone that lasts until the end of the encounter or until the mephit uses this power again. The zone is lightly obscured, and a creature that ends its turn in the zone takes 5 acid damage.

Minor Actions

✧ **Water Blast ✦ At-Will**
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in the blast); +6 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The mephit slides the target up to 2 squares.
Miss: The mephit can push the target 1 square.

Skills Bluff +8

Str 17 (+4)	**Dex** 10 (+1)	**Wis** 8 (+0)
Con 14 (+3)	**Int** 8 (+0)	**Cha** 14 (+3)

Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Primordial

Wraith

Wraith — Level 5 Lurker

Medium shadow humanoid (undead) — XP 200

HP 53; **Bloodied** 26 **Initiative** +10
AC 19, **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15 **Perception** +2
Speed 0, fly 6 (hover); phasing Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic

Traits

Insubstantial
The wraith takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the wraith takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Spawn Wraith
When the wraith kills a humanoid, that humanoid becomes a wraith figment at the start of this wraith's next turn. The new wraith appears in the space where the humanoid died or in the nearest unoccupied square, and it rolls a new initiative check. The new wraith acts under the Dungeon Master's control.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Shadow Touch** (necrotic) **✦ At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, or 4d6 + 14 necrotic damage if the wraith was invisible to the target when it attacked.

Triggered Actions

Shadow Glide (teleportation) **✦ At-Will**
Trigger: An attack that does not deal force or radiant damage hits the wraith.
Effect (Free Action): The wraith becomes invisible until it hits or misses with an attack or until the end of the encounter. The wraith teleports up to 6 squares and cannot attack until the end of its next turn.

Skills Stealth +11

Str 4 (-1)	**Dex** 18 (+6)	**Wis** 10 (+2)
Con 17 (+5)	**Int** 6 (+0)	**Cha** 15 (+4)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Yellow Mold

Death Mold Zombie	**Level 12 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 700
HP 147; **Bloodied** 73	**Initiative** +7
AC 24, **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 22	**Perception** +8
Speed 4	
Resist 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 fire	
Traits	
Dormant Corpse	
Whenever the zombie takes radiant damage, it falls prone.	
Standard Actions	
⊕ **Slam** ✦ **At-Will**	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +17 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 12 damage.	
Triggered Actions	
✧ **Spore Burst** (necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅	
Trigger: An enemy hits the zombie with a weapon attack.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (living creatures in the burst); +15 vs. Fortitude.	
Hit: 3d6 + 12 necrotic damage. A Small or Medium target dropped below 1 hit point by this attack immediately dies and becomes a death mold zombie. The zombie rolls initiative and acts on its turn under the Dungeon Master's control.	
Str 22 (+12) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+8)	
Con 17 (+9) **Int** 1 (+1) **Cha** 1 (+1)	
Alignment unaligned **Languages** –	

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ALL TRADEMARKS ARE THE PROPERTY OF THEIR RESPECTIVE OWNERS.

Vainglorious

A D&D Forgotten Realms adventure for characters of levels 7-9

By Daniel Helmick

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A proud paladin's quest for glory against marauding orcs ends in tragic failure with his disappearance and presumed death. Worse still, an artifact of his faith entrusted to him has gone missing. Can the adventurers reclaim the artifact and force an end to the hostilities, or will the brightest beacon of good in the Western Heartlands be extinguished?

Background

The theocracy of Elturgard (*Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*, pages 124-125) is a shining symbol of light in the Western Heartlands. The paladins of Torm who rule and guard this realm take pride in their moral clarity and pursuit of good, their hearts steeled by unwavering faith.

Six months ago, Sir Tavil Soarvaren of the Knights of the Fury—a vainglorious order comprised of Elturgard's finest paladins—convinced his faithful peers in Elturel that the time had come to bring Torm's wrath down upon the orcs of the High Moor, who were becoming a significant menace. Sir Tavil received the blessing of the High Observer, assembled his legion of knights, and set out on a quest to teach the orcs a bloody lesson. The High Observer so believed in Tavil's crusade that he entrusted the knight with a holy relic of the faith: a gauntlet forged after the Time of Troubles to commemorate Torm's resurrection following his mortal combat with Bane. Sir Tavil donned the gauntlet before setting out for Boareskyr Bridge and beyond to the High Moor.

Sir Tavil Soarvaren and his fellow knights were never seen again. Divinations confirmed everyone's worst fears: Sir Tavil's legion had been wiped out. It was a terrible blow to Elturgard—one that shook the paladins' normally unwavering faith. In the wake of the knights' demise, the orcs stepped up their attacks and began terrorizing the lands west of Elturgard. The horde even attacked Boareskyr Bridge, but was driven back. Adding insult to injury, reports have reached the High Observer in Elturel of a mighty orc wearing Sir Tavil's gauntlet into battle. A handful of bold paladins have died trying to reclaim it, further demoralizing Elturgard's ranks and forcing the High Observer to consider the extraordinary action of soliciting outside assistance. And so, the valiant lords of Elturgard, seen as righteous saviors by many, swallowed their pride and reached out for help.

Synopsis

Dame Halla Hatcher, youngest of the Observers of Elturgard, hires the adventurers to retrieve an enchanted gauntlet known as *Loyalty's Sacrifice*.

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She informs the party that Sir Tavil Soarvaren, the previous possessor of the gauntlet, went missing while leading a legion of the Knights of the Fury onto the High Moor to vanquish orc raiders.

After dispatching several small bands of orcs on their way into the interior of the High Moor, the adventurers run across a scrawny, teenaged half-orc named Garloz being chased by his kin. Garloz reveals the location of a ruined castle located in a hidden valley within the High Moor, where the orc chieftain, a hulking brute named Gryznath, makes his residence. As fate would have it, Gryznath comes across the party on his way back to the stronghold. Although the outcome is not set in stone, the odds are stacked in Gryznath's favor. The beleaguered party might be forced to surrender or retreat.

Whether aided by Garloz or escaping capture under their own power, the adventurers soon locate the ruined keep. While there, they have the opportunity to encounter and fight none other than Sir Tavil Soarvaren and his retinue, now battle wights under Gryznath's command. The characters do not find *Loyalty's Sacrifice* in Soarvaren's possession. Instead, the battle wight commander wears a black gauntlet covered in unholy runes dedicated to Faluzure, the draconic god of undeath. Soarvaren's departing spirit reveals that the black gauntlet allows Gryznath to connect to Soarvaren's life force, thus allowing Gryznath to harness the powers of *Loyalty's Sacrifice* even though he is not a worshiper of Torm.

A second confrontation with Gryznath reveals that he is not an orc at all, but a black dragon and a Chosen of Faluzure sent to topple the bastion of light that is Elturgard. But Gryznath, too, suffers from vainglory, possibly providing the key to his own defeat.

Major NPCs

The following three supporting characters feature prominently in the adventure.

Gryznath

Gryznath is an adult black dragon and a Chosen of Faluzure, the dragon god of undeath. He has the abilities of a dragon coupled with powers granted to him by his god. And now he has *Loyalty's Sacrifice* (an artifact of Torm) under his partial command.

Gryznath lairs in the ruins of an old keep whose history is lost to time. The dragon plans to turn the keep into a temple of Faluzure and convert the orc masses to the worship of the dragon god, elevating Faluzure. Gryznath also strives to take Boareskyr Bridge. From there, he and his orc army can stage repeated assaults against Elturel, eventually breaking Elturgard's power.

Though intelligent, Gryznath has one glaring flaw: He is vainglorious. As a Chosen of Faluzure, he believes he can cheat death at every turn. The dragon's recent victory over the paladins of Elturgard has only reinforced his belief that he cannot be defeated or outfoxed.

Sir Tavil Soarvaren

A highly decorated and respected paladin of Torm, Tavil Soarvaren was handpicked for the Knights of the Fury, a respected order based out of Elturel. Tavil is also a favorite of the High Observer of Elturgard. An augury performed by the High Observer revealed a possible future wherein Tavil became a Chosen of Torm in his prime, a destiny that will never come to pass. Tavil is now languishing in the service of Gryznath, who has reanimated the deceased paladin as a battle wight.

With Faluzure's guidance, Gryznath crafted a black gauntlet that he forces Tavil to wear. The black gauntlet's magic fools *Loyalty's Sacrifice* into "thinking" that it is being worn by Tavil and not Gryznath. If the black gauntlet is removed from Tavil's undead corpse, the dragon can no longer use *Loyalty's Sacrifice*.

Garloz

Garloz is an impressionable 14-year-old half-orc. His human mother escaped from her orc captors while still carrying Garloz, eventually giving birth in Elturel's temple of Torm. The priest who oversaw Garloz's birth became a domineering father figure to the young half-orc. Garloz railed against the priest's authority and the doctrine of the church, though, leading the infuriated priest to drive his surrogate son out of Elturel.

Garloz fled to the forests surrounding the High Moor and sought out his orc father's tribe, the Black Mark. The teenager is the subject of much abuse at the hands of his father's people, who view him as something less than an orc. Garloz is a late bloomer and has yet to fill out, but he is quick and clever. He is often beaten and belittled for the slightest failings in his duties as a general drudge.

Starting the Adventure

A bedraggled messenger approaches the party with a summons from Halla Hatcher, a junior Observer of Elturgard and paladin of Torm. The summons requests that the adventurers meet Hatcher at a teahouse in Elturel known as The Gardens.

Read:

The city of Elturel rests atop a cliff overlooking the River Chionthar, which flows westward toward the Sea of Swords. The capital of Elturgard holds the promise of good food and comfortable lodging. A brilliant magical orb hovers above the city, bathing Elturel's breathtaking architecture in golden luminescence day and night. Locals refer to the second sun as the Companion, and its light is said to protect the city and its inhabitants against evil and corruption.

The Gardens is a spotlessly clean and quiet little street-corner teahouse. A lone figure clad in glittering armor sips a warm brew from an earthenware mug before taking a long, deliberate swallow. As you approach, she rises and bows in the Elturgard fashion: right fist over her heart, bent at the hip, stiff and businesslike. Her voice is pleasant enough. "I'm Halla Hatcher." She gestures to the empty chairs around the bleached wooden table, then shoots a meaningful look at the proprietor, who nods curtly, closes the shop, and disappears into the back room.

Halla fixes you with a piercing look. "Speaking candidly, I am unaccustomed to foisting our problems onto others. It is hard to accept that adventurers such as yourselves could accomplish what our paladins cannot. Regretfully, we are out of options. You might be our last hope.

"Sir Tavil Soarvaren, one of our best, led a company of knights to the High Moor to destroy the orcs that have been gnawing at our borders. Our divinations reveal that Tavil's force met an untimely end. If that wasn't bad enough, Sir Tavil had an artifact of Torm in his possession—a silver gauntlet known as Loyalty's Sacrifice. We believe the item has fallen into orc hands. There have been sightings of a powerful orc champion wearing the gauntlet, but so far, we have been unable to kill this orc and reclaim the artifact.

"The High Observer wishes to avoid further death and disgrace. He wants Loyalty's Sacrifice returned to Elturel and thinks the time has come to seek outside assistance."

Halla answers the party's questions as honestly as she can. She is more comfortable speaking to divine-classed characters: first paladins, then avengers, then clerics or invokers. Like many paladins, she has a thinly veiled distrust of mages and druids, and she is cold toward warlocks of any stripe.

Halla offers 250 gp per adventurer for the job. She also provides each character one *potion of cure moderate wounds*. In addition, if the adventurers can provide proof that they have slain the leader of the orc horde (Gryznath), the party's monetary compensation will be doubled.

The characters also gain the following quest:

FIND THE GAUNTLET!
8th-Level Major Quest (350 XP/Character)

The characters complete this quest if they recover *Loyalty's Sacrifice* and return the artifact to the Observers of Elturgard.

Running the Adventure

The adventure follows a progression and is easily tailored to your tastes. The important steps include the following:

- The characters encounter Garloz.
- Gryznath attacks the characters.
- The party infiltrates Gryznath's keep.
- The party encounters Sir Tavil Soarvaren, a battle wight under Gryznath's command. From Tavil, the party can obtain information that enables them to deny Gryznath the use of *Loyalty's Sacrifice*.
- The party battles Gryznath in his lair beneath the keep. If they prevail, the adventurers can retrieve the *Loyalty's Sacrifice* and return it to Elturel.

Treasure

The characters are likely to gain a level during this adventure, so they should acquire about ten treasures along the way. Half of these should make up the dragon's hoard (area 14c of Gryznath's keep). The rest can be placed wherever you find it to be appropriate, but most should also be in the keep. There, areas 5, 7, and 8 are most appropriate. The wights in the graveyard (area 8) are the most likely creatures, besides Gryznath, to have magical treasure.

The reward from Halla can count as one treasure regardless of whether the money is doubled in the end.

Statistics Blocks

Many of the creature statistics used in this adventure appear in more than one encounter. Therefore, they (along with the statistics for *Loyalty's Sacrifice*) appear collected in an appendix at the end of the adventure. Each trap appears with its associated area.

High Moor Encounters

The rolling, rocky grasslands and sparse forest of the High Moor is infested with roving bands of orcs. Each hour the adventurers spend in the High Moor, check for a random encounter by rolling 2d6 and consulting the High Moor Encounters table.

HIGH MOOR ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Result
2-6	No encounter
7-9	2 orc rampagers, 5 orc reavers
10-11	2 orc rampagers, 5 orc reavers, 1 orc storm shaman
12	3 orc rampagers, 5 orc reavers, 2 orc storm shamans

These roving bands of orcs do not know the location of Gryznath's keep. Only a selected few among the orcs have been entrusted with this information.

Orc Rampagers

If reavers are the mobile shock troops of Gryznath's horde, orc rampagers are the front line. Tough and resilient, rampagers excel as defenders for the storm shamans and as a powerful wedge for launching strikes against enemies that fight from the rear. These orcs are willing to provoke opportunity attacks to reach softer targets.

Orc Reavers

These blood-crazed warriors are the mobile shock troops of the orc horde, and they are by far the most numerous. If enemies break through the rampager ranks, the reavers charge into melee combat. Gryznath has instructed them to spread out when attacking, to minimize the chances of falling to area attacks.

Orc Storm Shamans

Crafty and able to wield strong magic, storm shamans keep their distance, placing reavers and rampagers between themselves and their foes. In combat, they use *vengeful whirlwind* right away, clearing the path for reavers and rampagers to rain down destruction on their enemies.

Events

Assuming they do not take an extended rest, the adventurers arrive at the area where event 1 takes place after 3d4 hours spent exploring the High Moor. Event 2 occurs after event 1, with just enough time for the party to take a short rest in between. Event 3 occurs after the party's exploration of Gryznath's lair below the ruined keep.

Event 1: Hapless Half-Orc

Level 9 Combat Encounter (2,000 XP)

After 8 hours spent exploring the High Moor (not counting extended rests), the adventurers encounter a young half-orc, Garloz, fleeing ten orc bullies intent on doing him harm.

Light: Depends on time of day.

Monsters: Garloz (bloodied), 3 orc rampagers, 5 orc reavers, 1 orc storm shaman.

When you're ready to begin the event, read:

Cresting a small hill, an adolescent half-orc sprints away from ten adult orcs in pursuit. The half-orc is about 100 feet away when he spots you and veers in your direction, but then he stumbles and falls to the ground. He looks up at you with terror in his eyes. Out of breath and having obviously already taken a beating, he can only gasp, "Please help me!"

Combat

Garloz starts the encounter prone, 100 feet from the party. The orc rampagers are hot on his heels, only 50 feet behind him. The orc reavers and the storm shaman are 75 to 100 feet from Garloz and spread out. The orcs spot the party immediately, so neither side gains surprise.

The orcs fight to the death, spurred by their fear of Gryznath, who more often than not kills troops for perceived failures. As the battle is joined, Garloz staggers off into some bushes and helps, shooting his bow from a safe distance.

Conclusion

After the battle ends, Garloz emerges. The characters can take a short rest while speaking with Garloz or reading his journal.

If Garloz survived, read:

The gawky half-orc emerges from the underbrush as the last orc falls. Shock settles in, and he slowly drops to his knees, staring at the carnage. After a few seconds, he looks up at you with a look of gratitude and relief.

His voice trembles, and his hands start shaking. He says, "I thought they were going to kill me this time! Thank you for saving me. I'm Garloz."

Garloz stole scraps of meat from the orcs' cook pot after being punished for a similar earlier offense. The orcs then decided to have fun at his expense. At the very least, this fun likely involved a severe beating.

Garloz is a useful source of information if asked the right questions. He can also be intimidated into sharing what he knows, although any ill treatment disqualifies the characters from completing the Aid Garloz minor quest.

Garloz knows the following information.

- Gryznath, a mighty orc war chief, commands the orcs of the High Moor.
- Gryznath's lair is a network of crypts and caves under a ruined keep. Garloz knows the location of Gryznath's lair and can give excellent directions. He has been there on many occasions, forced to share his knowledge of Elturel with Gryznath.
- Gryznath recently slew a group of knights from Elturgard and removed a silver gauntlet from the body of their leader. He then used black magic to animate the knights' corpses into talking undead. (Garloz can describe the undead well enough that

someone who succeeds on a DC 17 Religion check can guess the creatures are wights.)

- The undead knights are confined to a graveyard west of the keep (area 8). A secret staircase in one of the graves leads to the catacombs under the keep (area 9).
- Four paladins survived the battle and are being held in the crypts under the ruined keep. Garloz believes they are allowed to live only to amuse Gryznath.
- Creepy "ghosts" guard the keep and kill whoever Gryznath tells them to. They are like fog that can drink blood. (A successful DC 17 Arcana or Religion check allows a character to identify the vampiric mists.)

Garloz offers to guide the characters to Gryznath's keep if they agree to take him back to Elturel with them after all is done. He makes his hopes for a new life very clear, granting the characters the Aid Garloz minor quest.

If Garloz is dead, from his journal the characters can piece together the keep's location and that Gryznath made defeated paladins into undead. The journal also mentions paladins are kept prisoner in the keep, since Garloz was considering helping them escape so he could return with them to Elturel.

AID GARLOZ

8th-Level Minor Quest (70 XP/Character)

The characters complete this quest if they make a genuine effort to find Garloz a new life, taking him on as a companion or finding him other employment.

Event 2: Gryznath Strikes

Level 11 Combat Encounter (1,500 XP if Gryznath flees, 3,000 XP if Gryznath is defeated)

The party is beset by the mysterious war chief known as Gryznath.

Light: Depends on time of day.
Monster: Gryznath.

When Gryznath shows up, read:

A dark, massive figure strides through the misty moors, drawing closer with each step. Garloz pales visibly, gasps, leaps up, and runs into the wilderness.

The approaching figure is another orc, but this one stands nearly 8 feet tall with dark gray skin. A massive falchion is unsheathed in his right hand. On his left hand is a shiny silver gauntlet that matches the description of Loyalty's Sacrifice.

The orc reaches up and strokes a dark symbol worn on a chain around his neck before hoisting his weapon. A smile crosses his cruel mouth as he beckons you forward.

Gryznath is feeling particularly full of himself. He has defeated, captured, tortured, and murdered dozens of Elturgard's knights in recent weeks, and he is eager to show the adventurers who's boss.

Gryznath speaks perfect Common. He taunts the characters in that language, speaking very clearly and astutely for an orc. His mastery of the Giant tongue isn't nearly as good, hinting at his true nature.

Gryznath remains in orc form for the battle.

Gryznath's Nature

Several clues can lead astute characters to the conclusion that the orc chieftain is not what he seems to be.

Draconic: A character who speaks Draconic and succeeds on a DC 16 Insight check notes that Gryznath speaks with a Draconic accent.

Insight (DC 16; 12 for martial characters): For all of Gryznath's great strength, he is not a skilled sword fighter. His blows are powerful but his technique is sloppy, suggesting that he is unaccustomed to wielding a weapon. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character also realizes Gryznath doesn't fight like other orcs.

Religion (DC 20): The symbol Gryznath wears is that of Faluzure, a draconic god of undeath.

Conclusion

Gryznath fights until he is bloodied, until three or more characters drop to 0 hit points, or until the party flees.

GRYZNATH'S DEFEAT

If the characters slay Gryznath in orc form, the party can reclaim *Loyalty's Sacrifice*. In this eventuality, you have a couple options for continuing the adventure.

Gryznath Rises: As a Chosen of Faluzure, the dragon god of undeath, Gryznath enjoys certain benefits. Left unattended, his corpse animates as an undead version of itself in an hour. Gryznath rises at full hit points and gains resist 10 necrotic and vulnerable 10 radiant. Gryznath then flies to his keep, barely beating the characters there.

Missing Knights: Even though Gryznath is dead, Sir Tavil Soarvaren and his black gauntlet are still very much active. Because *Loyalty's Sacrifice* still "thinks" it is on Soarvaren's arm, it resists all attempts to remove it from its owner, dealing 2d10 + 5 lightning and radiant damage to anyone who attempts to remove the gauntlet from the dragon's corpse. Removing it requires finding Soarvaren's gauntlet. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Arcana check to detect magic can tell *Loyalty's Sacrifice* is connected to another object in another place. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character glimpses the whole truth.

If Gryznath is bloodied, read:
Clutching a bleeding wound, the great orc frowns. "You'll pay for this, you pathetic worms. This is far from over."

He turns on his heel and runs away at top speed. He moves with preternatural quickness, his legs a blur.

If Gryznath drops three characters, read:
The orc smiles wolfishly at those of you left standing, and salutes you with his blade.

He says, "A pleasant distraction. Inform your superiors in Elturgard that the High Moor is mine, and the rest of the Western Heartlands will be mine soon enough. Enter my land again, and I'll slaughter you and use your souls and corpses for the darkest arts."

With that, he turns and walks away.

If the characters flee, read:
The orc smiles wolfishly as you retreat, and salutes you with his blade.

He shouts, "A pleasant distraction. Inform your superiors in Elturgard that the High Moor is mine, and the rest of the Western Heartlands will be mine soon enough. Enter my land again, and I'll slaughter you and use your souls and corpses for the darkest arts."

With that, he turns and walks away.

Once out of sight, Gryznath returns to his natural form and flies to his lair. If the characters follow on foot, it takes them 3 hours to reach the ruined keep.

Gryznath's Keep

Gryznath's keep is concealed within a misty canyon deep in the High Moor. Gryznath's orcs have been clearing debris and making repairs. So far, the area has been cleared enough to allow Gryznath to move into the crypts beneath the keep. But the keep is far from an impenetrable fortress at this point.

To bolster the keep's defenses, Gryznath summoned vampiric mists to guard the ruins. The

creatures have orders against harming the orcs, but the orcs are frightened of the undead nonetheless.

As the characters approach the keep, read:
Within a shallow, misty canyon hidden in the heart of the High Moor stands a dilapidated stone keep. The top floor has collapsed, but signs of renovation are evident on the ground floor. Among the newer features is a gatehouse equipped with solid oak double doors.

The keep has the following features.

Barred Windows: The keep has several ground floor windows fitted with iron bars spaced 6 inches apart. Prying a bar from the surrounding stonework requires a DC 28 Athletics check.

Collapsed Upper Floor: The entire upper floor has collapsed. Characters can climb the 15-foot-high outer walls with DC 15 Athletics checks and search through the second-story rubble to find holes in the ceiling that lead down into areas 2, 4, and 6.

Noise: A gruff singing voice can be heard emanating from area 4, and loud orc voices can be heard from area 6.

1. Gatehouse

Exploration Encounter

Light: Dim (sunlight or moonlight from outdoors, no light source within).

Outer Doors: These sturdy wooden doors are barred shut from within. They can withstand 75 points of damage and require a DC 20 Strength check to force open.

The gatehouse is bare of adornment and empty of other creatures when the characters arrive.

2. Killing Room

Level 6 Combat Encounter (1,600 XP)

Light: Dim (sputtering torch).
Monsters: 3 vampiric mists.

When the characters can see the area, read:
Ruined decorations, faded tapestries, and crumbling reliefs lend a sinister air to this once-lavish central chamber. A single torch flickering in the southeast corner of the room reveals a sconce splotched with rust, walls streaked with mildew, and a floor stained with dry blood. Loud voices echo through the chamber from behind a set of doors to the north. There are four more sets of double doors to the west and south.

Vampiric mists in area 7 can sense living creatures entering this room. The monsters attack.

When the mists attack, read:
Thick mist seeps through the cracks in the double doors that are set in the middle of the western wall. As the mist billows into the room, it begins to coalesce into humanoid shapes.

Four vampiric mists pour into the room from area 7. Sounds of combat in this room alert the creatures in areas 4 and 6. Fearing the mists, these creatures do not investigate.

3. Larder

Exploration Encounter

Light: None.

This cool, dry room is stocked with nonperishable foodstuffs plundered from Elturgard and other neighboring areas. There are eighteen crates of rations, two half-filled crates of torches, and nine casks of mead.

4. Restless Ogre

Level 9 Combat Encounter (XP 2,350)

An orc storm shaman is trying to calm a massive chained ogre, who appears to be beyond all reason.

Light: Bright light (eight candles in iron candlesticks).

Monsters: Ogre juggernaut, orc storm shaman.

When the characters can see the area, read:
A pile of rocky debris and an enormous maul are apparent the southern half of this round, candlelit chamber. A muscle-bound ogre is yoked and chained to sturdy iron rings set into the floor. An orc shaman is singing to the ogre, perhaps trying to put it to sleep.

When the monsters sense the characters, add:
The ogre's ears perk up, and it growls as its red-rimmed eyes cast a baleful glare in your direction. Gripping its chains tightly in its white-knuckled hands, it begins to pull. Cracks start appearing in the stone floor. The shaman begins shouting for reinforcements.

On its turn, the ogre juggernaut pulls itself free of its restraints and grabs its maul. On her turn, the shaman sidles to the back wall of the chamber and attacks while shouting for reinforcements. The orcs from area 6 arrive at the end of the second round.

The shaman has eight more candles and a *candle of invocation* +2 (see *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*™, page 42).

5. Barracks

Exploration Encounter

The keep's former kitchen has been converted into makeshift barracks.

Light: Bright (five torches in wall sconces).

When the characters arrive, read:

Broken dishes, utensils, and tables strewn upon the floor suggest that this room once served as a kitchen. Now, eight filthy cots fill the room, along with several empty casks.

The orcs in area 6 sleep here. The empty casks used to contain mead.

6. Dining Hall

Level 7 Combat Encounter (1,500 XP)

This once-opulent dining hall is now used by orcs.

Light: Bright light (eight torches in sconces).

Monsters: 2 orc rampagers, 5 orc reavers.

If orcs are present when characters enter, read:

Eight orcs dressed in leather armor are here, eating meat, drinking from horns, and shouting at one another in Giant.

Silence falls and all heads turn to the characters as soon as the orcs notice the party.

To describe the room, read:

Two long wooden tables fill the middle of this once-grand dining hall. The tables have been gouged and hacked with blades, and one has a bloody handaxe embedded in the top of it. They are also strewn with bits of food and broken dishware. Suspended above each table is an unlit, wrought-iron chandelier spotted with candle wax.

7. Vampiric Mist Den

Exploration Encounter

Vampiric mists languish in this windowless room until they sense creatures in area 2. If the mists did not attack the characters in area 2, they are here.

Light: None.

Read:

A weapon cabinet with a smashed lock stands against the back wall of this dark and otherwise empty room.

The weapon cabinet has a secret compartment in the back (Perception DC 25 to find). The secret compartment contains a +2 *stinging spear* (*Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page 31).

8. Haunted Graveyard

Level 9 Combat Encounter (2,000 XP)

Undead lurk in the graveyard, bound by Gryznath's will and a shrine to Faluzure.

Light: Dim from the aura of dread.

Monsters: Sir Tavil Soarvaren and 2 former paladins (battle wights), 2 vampiric mists.

As the characters approach the graveyard, read:

In a small graveyard on the western side of the keep, a dome of shadow ends at a wrought-iron fence festooned with rusty spikes surrounds. Thick mist clings to the graves. Three figures in plate armor stand in the shadow and mist. In a mockery of the Elturgard salute, the foremost warrior raises a hand encased in a black gauntlet engraved with runes, and rests it against his breastplate.

Arcana DC 17: The mist and shadow is not of this world but of the Shadowfell.

Perception DC 25: The mist conceals a malign intelligence. One or more creatures lurk there.

Arcana DC 25 (Detect Magic): Something in the graveyard is a magical anchor for the dome of shadow here.

If the characters enter the graveyard, the wights and mists attack.

Aura of Dread

Buried in the middle of the graveyard is a black dragon's claw, an icon of Faluzure, that fills the graveyard with an aura of shadow and fear. Any living creature that attempts to attack into the graveyard from outside it takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and is weakened (save ends both).

Signs of the claw's burial can easily be seen from within the graveyard. Exhuming the claw ends the aura of dread.

Conclusion

Destroying the wights and mists allows Sir Tavil Soarvaren's ghost to manifest.

After all the undead are defeated, read:
Rising from one of the wights is a beautiful apparition of a knight clad in shimmering armor of Elturgard. He favors you with a wan smile.

Sir Soarvaren cannot speak until the aura of dread is ended, but he can point the characters to the claw.

After Sir Soarvaren can speak, read:
"I thank you with every fiber of my soul. Were it not for you, the black dragon would have bound me here forever, torturing me with his commands.

"I was a vainglorious fool. I could not see that Torm was testing more than my faith. He wanted to see if I would place my own glory and pride above my duty. I was doomed to fail—I see that now.

"I leave it to you to make things right. The dragon forced me to wear a dark mockery of Loyalty's Sacrifice, fooling that holiest of relics into thinking that I still wore it, thus enabling the dragon to harness its power. Now that I am freed, the dragon can usurp the blessings of Torm only until you destroy this black gauntlet. Do so, and the dragon will suffer the agony an evil creature deserves for wearing Loyalty's Sacrifice. It will have no choice but to remove the relic.

"But I warn you! Even then, the dragon is not to be trifled with. He is one of the Chosen of Faluzure, the draconic god of undeath!

"Save Elturgard from whatever dark fate the dragon has planned, and may Torm protect you!"

If the characters ask about the dragon, read:
"His name is Gryznath. The creature is a shapeshifter that masquerades as an orc war chief. The orcs here believe he is an orc that can take the shape of a dragon, but the reverse is true."

Sir Tavil's soul can manifest for only a short time. It might answer one or two more questions before fading away.

Treasure

Sir Tavil Soarvaren might be wielding or wearing a magic item, as well as the black gauntlet. The gauntlet feels cold to the touch. On a successful DC 17 Arcana or Religion check, a character touching the gauntlet knows the secret to destroying it. If its wearer is struck by the power of *Loyalty's Sacrifice*, the black gauntlet absorbs all the attack's damage and then disintegrates.

9. Hidden Stairs

Exploration Encounter

Six inches of packed dirt and wooden planks conceal a 5-foot-wide staircase that spirals down 30 feet to area 11. Someone who walks across the area and succeeds on a DC 17 Perception check notices it gives like dirt atop wooden planks. Otherwise, a successful DC 25 Perception check allows a character to find the stairway during a search of the graveyard. If Garloz is with the party, he can point out the location.

10. Staircase to Crypts

Exploration Encounter

Read:
A wide stone staircase leads down.

When someone descends to the bottom, read:
At the bottom of the staircase is a flagstone landing and a pair of rotting wooden doors, through which passes a faint breeze that reeks of death.

The doors are unlocked and can be pushed open on rusty hinges.

Crypts

Gryznath lairs in this network of crypts and caves hidden under the ruined keep.

Light: All areas are dark unless noted otherwise.

Restless Dark: The presence of the Chosen of Faluzure has corrupted these chambers and caves to the extent that intruders feel a profound sense of unease and gain no benefits for resting here.

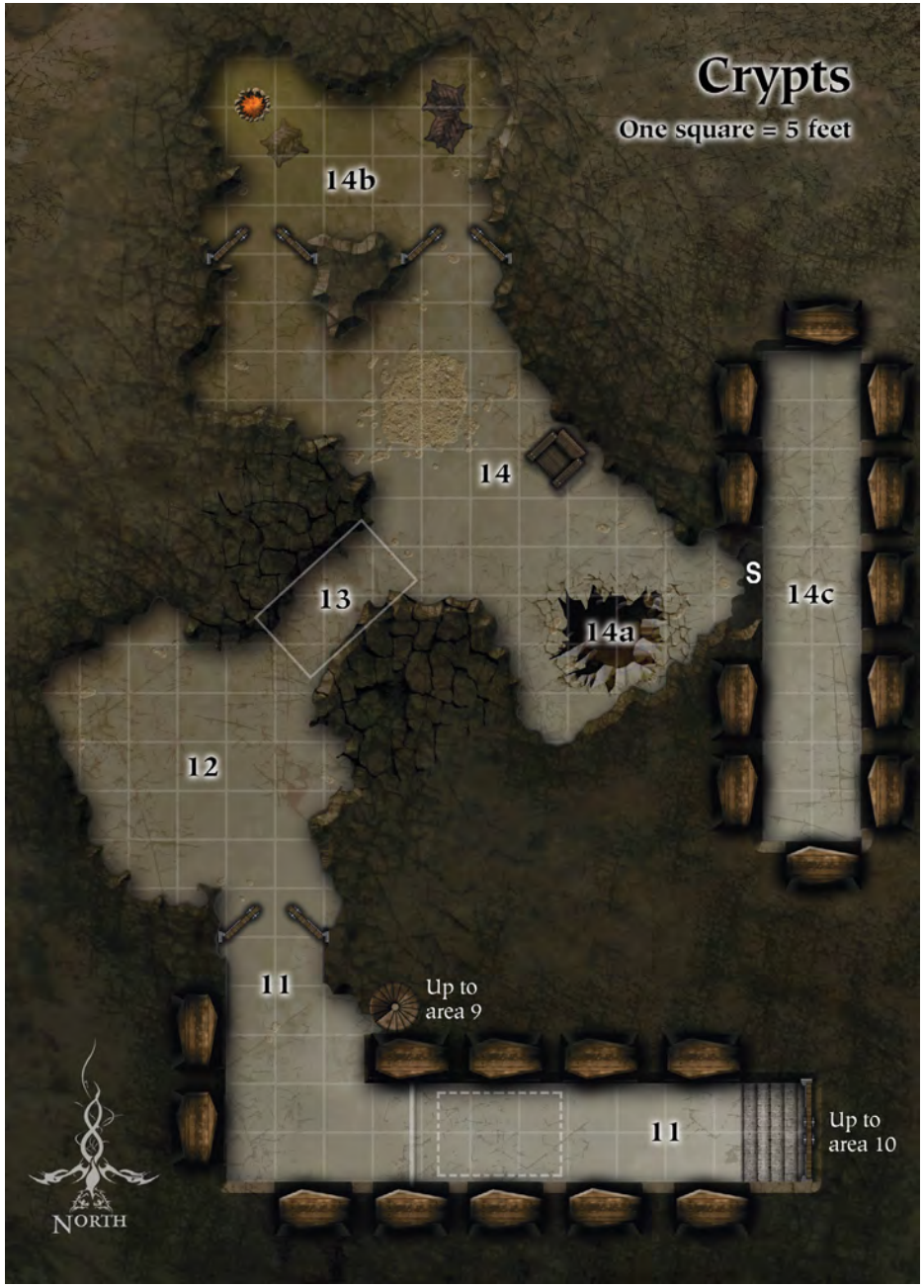
11. Trapped Catacombs

Level 9 Trap Encounter (400 XP)

Characters can reach these catacombs via the main staircase (area 10) or the hidden stairs (area 9).

Traps: Deep spiked pit (hidden under false floor).

Other Features: Invisible net.



If the party descends from area 9, read:
The spiral staircase opens into an L-shaped hall of crumbling masonry, its walls carved with niches containing moldy wooden coffins. To the north, you see a pair of open doors, beyond which is darkness.

Beyond the open doors to the north is a cave filled with magical darkness (see area 12).

If the party descends from area 10, read:
An 8-foot-high, 10-foot wide hall of crumbling masonry leads west into darkness. The walls are lined with niches, each containing a moldy wooden coffin.

Niches: Carved into the walls are niches 8 feet long, 4 feet high, 4 feet deep, and 2 feet off the floor. Within each niche is a rotted coffin that contains a human skeleton.

Invisible Net: West of the pit, the line on the map indicates the location of an invisible rope net, which becomes visible if touched. Someone who succeeds on a DC 17 Arcana check to detect magic senses the net, which can also be made visible with a subsequent successful DC 17 Arcana check (trained only).

If a creature successfully jumps west over the pit while unaware of the net, the creature hits the net. Unless the creature then succeeds on a saving throw to grab hold of the net, the creature rebounds into the pit trap's area. If a creature ends its turn holding onto the net after hitting it, the net collapses into the pit trap's area.

A creature that is aware of the net can pull it down with a successful DC 12 Athletics check.

Deep Spiked Pit	Level 9 Trap
Object	XP 400
Detect Perception DC 17	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
Attack ✦ At-Will	
Trigger: A Medium or larger creature enters one of the pit's four squares.	
Attack (No Action): Melee 1 (the triggering creature); +12 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls 30 feet to the bottom of the pit, takes 4d10 + 10 damage, and falls prone.	
Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied, and its movement ends immediately.	
Effect: The pit is open and no longer concealed.	
Countermeasures	
✦ **Open:** Athletics or Thievery DC 17 (standard action). *Success:* The pit is open and no longer concealed.	
✦ **Climb:** The pit can be climbed (Athletics DC 15).	

12. Shroud of Gloom

Exploration Encounter

Magical, impenetrable darkness fills this chamber. Any light source brought into the room is blotted out, but not dispelled or extinguished. The magical darkness filling the room also impedes darkvision. Gryznath placed the darkness here to unnerve trespassers, but it is otherwise harmless.

13. Weak Tunnel

Level 9 Trap Encounter (800 XP)

This stretch of tunnel connects areas 12 and 14. The tunnel ceiling is weak and may collapse as a result of the dragon's actions (see area 14 for details).

Weakened Tunnel	Level 9 Elite Trap
Terrain	XP 800
Detect Dungeoneering DC 17	**Initiative** –
Immune attacks	
Triggered Actions	
Attack ✦ At-Will	
Trigger: The ceiling takes damage or is subjected to significant vibration.	
Attack (No Action): Targets all creatures in the trap's area; +14 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target is buried. While buried (see "Countermeasures"), the target is prone and restrained, and takes ongoing 10 damage.	
Miss: Half damage.	
Effect: The collapsed area is difficult terrain.	
Countermeasures	
Escape: Acrobatics or Athletics DC 21 (standard action; a character who is not buried can make this check on behalf of another buried creature). *Success:* The target is no longer buried.	

14. Gryznath's Lair

Level 12 Combat Encounter (3,600 XP)

Gryznath makes his final stand here.

Light: Dim light in area 14a, otherwise none.

Monsters: Gryznath, 3 orc reavers. The orcs begin in area 14b, and the dragon begins in area 14c.

Other Creatures: 4 paladins of Elturel (see the "Prisoners" section of area 14c).

Secret Door: The secret door (Perception DC 25 to find) into area 14c has a peephole (Perception DC 17 to find) in it. If the peephole is found, the DC to find the door lowers to 17.

Read:

The tunnel widens to form a rough-hewn chamber with a 15-foot-high ceiling. The walls are damp, and the pitted floor is strewn with bones and black, cast-off dragon scales.

A stone throne scarred by acid and gouged with claw marks stands against the far wall. To the throne's left stand two sets of double doors, both ajar. Beyond these half-opened doors, portions of a smaller, firelit cave can be seen. To the right of the throne, the floor falls away into a sinkhole of unknown depth.

If the orcs in area 14b hear intruders, they rush through the double doors into the area 14 and attack any interlopers they find. If Gryznath hears the orcs' battle cries or sounds of combat, he watches through the peephole carved into the secret door leading to area 14c for 2 rounds. He then emerges from the secret door in orc form.

When Gryznath appears in orc form, read:

A secret door in one corner of the room swings open, revealing an orc of great size wearing a familiar gauntlet.

"I've been waiting for you," he growls. He then holds up his mailed fist. "You want this, don't you? Then come and take it!"

Gryznath uses *Loyalty's Sacrifice* as soon as he can.

Development

Gryznath remains in orc form until bloodied , until all the orcs are slain, or until he is deprived of *Loyalty's Sacrifice*. Then he assumes his true dragon form.

If Gryznath uses *Loyalty's Sacrifice* against a character wearing Sir Tavil's gauntlet, read:

The black gauntlet absorbs the energy from Loyalty's Sacrifice and crumbles to dust. At the same time, Gryznath howls as the shining gauntlet he wears burns his flesh.

Gryznath takes 2d10 + 5 lightning and radiant damage and loses the ability use *Loyalty's Sacrifice*. He must take a minor action on his turn to hurl the gauntlet off. If he can't, he takes 2d10 + 5 lightning and radiant damage each time he starts his turn wearing the artifact.

When Gryznath assumes his true form, read:
The orc transforms into a monstrous black dragon before your eyes, its skull-like visage grimacing as black, acidic drool drips from its mouth onto the floor.

"Very clever," the dragon hisses. "But when Elturgard is a rotted memory and your petty triumphs are long forgotten, I will still be here to laugh at your folly."

Gryznath uses a free action to roar. The ceiling in area 13 collapses if it has not already done so.

14a. Sinkhole

This sinkhole formed long ago, creating a 50-foot-deep pit. Thick mud fills the pit to a depth of 3 feet, such that any creature falling into the pit takes no damage but is restrained (save ends). The pit walls have abundant handholds and footholds (DC 10 Athletics checks to climb).

14b. Orc Lair

Gryznath's orc underlings lair here.

Light: Dim light (small campfire).

Read:
Beyond the double doors is an irregularly shaped cave with a 10-foot-high ceiling. Three mangy wolf skins lie on the floor, and a crackling campfire spews smoke and embers in one corner.

14c. Secret Catacombs

Gryznath keeps his treasure and his prisoners hidden here, behind the secret door.

Light: None.

When the characters open the secret door, read:
Beyond the secret door, you see a long hallway with walls of crumbling masonry. Set into these walls are several niches, each one just big enough to hold a rotting wooden coffin. Everything is damp and slick with mildew.

Prisoners: Tied up and gagged in the four western coffins are four human Elturgard paladins (two males, Ian and Tamik; two females, Neris and Urthana). The orcs stripped the paladins of their armor and weapons, which are found among the dragon's hoard.

The paladins have been abused to the point that they are bloodied, have no healing surges, and have access only to at-will powers. They have little to offer the characters until they can heal and rest. None of these paladins is willing to wear *Loyalty's Sacrifice*, because they believe they do not have the right to do so. If the characters return the paladins to Elturel alive, award each party member 350 XP.

Treasure: The other coffins contain the dragon's hoard, which includes as many parcels as you choose to place here. It also contains four suits of damaged plate armor, four shields, and four longswords.

Concluding the Adventure

The return trip to Elturel might be as fraught with danger as the initial trip across the High Moor.

After the party returns to Elturgard and turns *Loyalty's Sacrifice* over, Observer Hatcher gratefully pays the reward. Her handling of the affair raises her profile within Elturel, and some whisper that she might succeed the current High Observer one day.

The defeat of Gryznath and the recovery of *Loyalty's Sacrifice* effectively quells the orc aggression in the High Moor for the time being. Gryznath's intimidating leadership, and his successful campaign against the paladins of Elturgard, held the orc tribes together. With him out of the picture, the orc tribes succumb to vicious infighting. Within two weeks, the paladins of Elturgard win back their lost ground, pushing the orcs deep into the High Moor.

Some weeks later, the High Observer leads Elturel's finest knights to the keep, only to find it completely deserted, Gryznath's corpse nowhere to be found. Has Gryznath risen from the dead with Faluzure's blessing, or has some unknown faction claimed the dead dragon's remains? Only time will tell.

If the party includes a paladin of Torm, that character might be granted the use of *Loyalty's Sacrifice* for a time. That time is likely to be laden with peril, since the wearer of the gauntlet is expected to use its power to protect Elturgard from danger.

About the Author

Daniel Helmick is a former Wizards of the Coast employee who handles the odd bit of work and bothers his old R&D contacts every chance he gets. He has contributed three articles to *Dragon* in the past year, and this article is his first *Dungeon* adventure.

Appendix: Statistics

Statistics for monsters, nonplayer characters, and *Loyalty's Sacrifice* appear in this section.

Loyalty's Sacrifice — Paragon Level

This right-hand gauntlet of glimmering mithril has gold inlay in its segmented arm plates. It looks like the holy symbol of Torm, the Loyal Fury.

Artifact: Hands slot item

Properties

- ✦ If you are evil, each time you start your turn wearing this gauntlet, you take 3d10 lightning and radiant damage. To use the gauntlet's power and other properties you must be a good-aligned paladin dedicated to Torm.
- ✦ If you worship Torm, the gauntlet functions as a *+3 holy symbol* for you. On a critical hit with an implement attack power using this holy symbol, you deal +3d10 lightning and radiant damage.
- ✦ You gain a +1 item bonus to Fortitude, Reflex, and Will.
- ✦ You gain a +2 item bonus to saving throws.

Attack Power (Healing, Lightning, Radiant) ✦ **Daily** (Standard Action)

Attack: Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); level + 3 (up to +15) vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d10 lightning and radiant damage, and you can push the target 1 square.

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Until the end of the encounter, you have regeneration 5 while you are bloodied, and each ally in the burst gains the benefit of the gauntlet's last two properties.

Gryznath, Chosen of Faluzure Level 11 Solo Brute

Large natural magical beast (aquatic), black dragon XP 3,000

HP 460; **Bloodied** 230 **Initiative** +11
AC 25, **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23 **Perception** +13
Speed 10 (swamp walk), fly 10 (hover), swim 10 Darkvision
Resist 15 acid
Saving Throws +5; **Action Points** 2

Traits

Acidic Blood (acid)
Whenever Gryznath takes damage while he is bloodied, each creature adjacent to him takes 5 acid damage.

Action Recovery
Whenever Gryznath ends his turn, any dazing, stunning, or dominating effect on him ends.

Aquatic
Gryznath can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, he gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against nonaquatic creatures.

Instinctive Bloodlust
On an initiative of 10 + his initiative check, Gryznath can use a free action to charge or make a basic attack. If Gryznath cannot use a free action to make this attack due to a dominating or stunning effect, then that effect ends instead of Gryznath making the attack.

Standard Actions

Bite (acid, necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage, and ongoing 5 acid and necrotic damage (save ends).

Claw ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC.
Hit: 3d6 + 9 damage, and Gryznath pushes the target up to 2 squares.

Tail ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 4 (one creature); +16 vs. AC.
Hit: 3d6 + 9 damage, and the target falls prone.

Falchion (weapon) ✦ At-Will
Requirement: Gryznath must be in humanoid form.
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC
Hit: 3d8 + 9 damage.

Fury ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Gryznath makes three basic attacks, but can use *bite* and *tail* only once each.

Breath Weapon (acid, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⚅
Attack: Close blast 5 (creatures in the blast); +14 vs. Reflex
Hit: 3d8 + 5 acid and necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 acid and necrotic damage (save ends).
Miss: Half damage.

Faluzure's Curse (necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** if the attack misses
Attack: Melee 1 (one bloodied creature); +14 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d10 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the start of Gryznath's next turn.
Miss: Half damage.
Effect: Gryznath gains hit points equal to the damage dealt. If the target drops to 0 hit points, Gryznath gains 1 action point, which he can spend this encounter.

Minor Actions

Change Shape (polymorph) ✦ **At-Will** (1/round)
Effect: Gryznath alters his physical form to appear as a Medium or Large humanoid until he uses *change shape* again or until 1d4 hours pass after he drops to 0 hit points. In humanoid form, Gryznath cannot use *bite*, *claw*, or *tail*. To assume a specific individual's form, Gryznath must have seen that individual, but Gryznath always appears darker, larger, and more malevolent than his counterpart (no check required to notice).

Triggered Actions

Bloodied Breath ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Gryznath is first bloodied.
Effect (Free Action): Breath weapon recharges, and Gryznath uses it.

Skills Stealth +16

Str 18 (+9)	**Dex** 22 (+11)	**Wis** 16 (+8)
Con 16 (+8)	**Int** 16 (+8)	**Cha** 18 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common, Draconic, Giant

Orc Rampager **Level 6 Brute**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250

HP 90; **Bloodied** 45 **Initiative** +5
AC 18, **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +3
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

Berserk Flailing
While the orc is bloodied and can take opportunity actions, any enemy that starts its turn adjacent to the orc takes 5 damage.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Heavy Flail** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.

Rampage ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: The orc shifts up to 3 squares and can use *heavy flail* against three enemies during the shift.

Handaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the orc can push the target 1 square.

Triggered Actions

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 21 (+8) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 20 (+8) **Int** 8 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment leather armor, 4 handaxes, heavy flail

Ogre Juggernaut **Level 10 Brute**
Large natural humanoid (giant) XP 500

HP 131; **Bloodied** 65 **Initiative** +7
AC 22, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20 **Perception** +7
Speed 8

Standard Actions

⊕ **Greatclub** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 4d8 + 5 damage.

Rock ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +15 vs. AC
Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage.

Juggernaut Push ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Fortitude
Hit: The ogre pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone. The ogre then shifts 1 square to the square the target vacated. The ogre can push the target an additional number of squares equal to the ogre's speed, shifting an equal number of squares and remaining adjacent to it. The target takes 1d8 damage for each additional square the ogre pushes it.

Str 24 (+12) **Dex** 15 (+7) **Wis** 15 (+7)
Con 21 (+10) **Int** 4 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Giant
Equipment greatclub, 4 rocks

Orc Reaver **Level 5 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid XP 200

HP 63; **Bloodied** 31 **Initiative** +7
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +3
Speed 6 (8 when charging) Low-light vision

Traits

Charging Mobility
While charging, the orc gains a +4 bonus to all defenses.

Standard Actions

⊕ **Battleaxe** (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 8 damage.
Effect: After the attack, the orc can shift 1 square.

Javelin (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage, and the orc can push the target 1 square.

Triggered Actions

Blood-Crazed Charge ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: The orc hits an enemy.
Effect (Free Action): The orc charges an enemy.

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 8 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment hide armor, battleaxe, 4 javelins

Orc Storm Shaman **Level 6 Artillery**
Medium natural humanoid XP 250

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27 **Initiative** +7
AC 20, **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18 **Perception** +6
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Standard Actions

Scimitar (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 8 damage.

Lightning Strike (lightning) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 30 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex
Hit: 1d10 + 8 lightning damage, and one enemy within 5 squares of the target takes 5 lightning damage.

Vengeful Whirlwind (lightning, thunder, zone) ✦ **Recharge** when first bloodied
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 4 lightning and thunder damage, and the target falls prone. Then the shaman slides the target up to 2 squares.
Miss: Half damage, and the shaman can slide the target 1 square.
Effect: The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the orc's next turn. Any enemy that ends its turn in the zone takes 10 thunder and lightning damage.

Triggered Actions

Wind Walk ✦ Encounter
Trigger: The shaman is first bloodied.
Effect (Free Action): Until the end of the encounter, the shaman gains a fly speed of 8 but must land or fall at the end of each move.

Savage Demise
Trigger: The orc drops to 0 hit points.
Effect (Free Action): The orc takes a standard action.

Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 16 (+6)
Con 12 (+4) **Int** 8 (+2) **Cha** 9 (+2)

Alignment chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment hide armor, scimitar

Vampiric Mist **Level 9 Skirmisher**
Medium shadow animate (undead) XP 400

HP 85; **Bloodied** 42 **Initiative** +11
AC 23, **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19 **Perception** +7
Speed 0, fly 5 (altitude limit 2) Darkvision
Immune disease; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 10 poison; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Traits

Siphoning Presence (necrotic) ✦ **Aura** 1
Enemies can't spend healing surges in the aura. When an enemy ends its turn in the aura, it takes 5 necrotic damage, and the mist gains 5 temporary hit points.

Insubstantial
The mist takes half damage from any damage source, except those that deal fire, force, or radiant damage. When it takes fire or radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.

Mist Form
The mist can move through openings of any size. It can also enter other creatures' spaces and end its turn there.

Standard Actions

Life Drain (necrotic) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 necrotic until the end of the mist's next turn.

Wave of Lethargy (necrotic, psychic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Close burst 2 (creatures in the burst); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 2d10 + 2 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mist's next turn.

Move Actions

Shifting Mists ✦ At-Will
Effect: The mist shifts up to its speed.

Str 7 (+2) **Dex** 21 (+9) **Wis** 17 (+7)
Con 20 (+9) **Int** 5 (+1) **Cha** 9 (+3)

Alignment evil **Languages** –

Battle Wight **Level 9 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 400

HP 98; **Bloodied** 49 **Initiative** +7
AC 25, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 22 **Perception** +3
Speed 5 Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Standard Actions

Soul-Draining Longsword (necrotic, weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, the target loses a healing surge, and it is immobilized until the end of its next turn.

Soul Reaping (healing, necrotic) ✦ **Recharge** ⚄ ⁞⁞
Attack: Ranged 5 (one immobilized creature); +12 vs. Fortitude
Hit: 3d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the wight regains 10 hit points.

Skills Intimidate +14
Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 13 (+5) **Wis** 9 (+3)
Con 18 (+8) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 20 (+9)

Alignment evil **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

Garloz **Level 5 Striker**
Medium natural humanoid, half-orc

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23; **Healing Surges** 8 **Initiative** +5
AC 19, **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16 **Perception** +8
Speed 6 Low-light vision

Traits

First Blood
Garloz's attacks deal 1d10 extra damage against any target that has not yet taken damage during the encounter.

Standard Actions

Battleaxe (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage.

Longbow (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Ranged 20/40 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d10 + 7 damage.

Evasive Attack ✦ **At-Will**
Effect: Garloz can shift 1 square, make a basic attack, and then he can shift 1 square.

Triggered Actions

Furious Assault ✦ **Encounter**
Trigger: Garloz deals damage with an attack.
Effect (Free Action): The attack deals 1d10 extra damage.

Skills Endurance +9, Nature +8
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 8 (+1)
Alignment unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant
Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, longbow, 20 arrows

Elturgard Paladin **Level 5 Defender**
Medium natural humanoid, human

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26; **Healing Surges** 10 **Initiative** +3
AC 22, **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18 **Perception** +4
Speed 5

Traits

Defender Aura ✦ **Aura** 1
Unmarked enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls when they make an attack that does not include the paladin or another creature that has an active *defender aura* as a target.

Standard Actions

Longsword (weapon) ✦ **At-Will**
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 1d8 + 7 damage.

Flashing Blade (radiant) ✦ **Encounter**
Attack: Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. AC
Hit: 2d6 + 7 radiant damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the paladin's next turn.

Lay on Hands (healing) ✦ **Daily**
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature); the paladin loses a healing surge, and if the paladin does, the target regains 20 hit points and can make a saving throw.

Triggered Actions

Righteous Radiance (radiant) ✦ **At-Will**
Trigger: An unmarked enemy in the paladin's aura shifts or makes an attack that does not include the paladin or another creature that has an active *defender aura* as a target.
Effect (Opportunity Action): Melee 1 (the triggering enemy). 9 radiant damage.

Skills Heal +9, Religion +7
Str 17 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 13 (+3) **Int** 11 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+5)
Alignment good **Languages** Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

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The Battle of Emridy Meadows

A D&D Next adventure for characters of levels 5-7

By Jon Leitheusser & Christopher Perkins

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A horde of savage humanoids led by deranged cultists have spilled out from the Temple of Elemental Evil and spread across the land, bent on conquest and destruction. Whipped into a frenzy by the demon queen Zuggtmoy, the servants of Elemental Evil have become a plague.

The Righteous Host, an army created to combat the menace, stands as the last bulwark against the tide of chaos and evil. The host is the world's last hope of thwarting the dark designs of Elemental Evil, but their forces are vastly outnumbered. They have the will to fight, but is that enough to crush an overwhelming enemy? Whatever the outcome, the fate of Oerth will be decided at the Battle of Emridy Meadows.

The leaders of the Righteous Host recruit the adventurers to undertake a series of missions

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requiring a small but effective group of characters with a variety of skills. No single mission will win the war, but each success helps turn the tide in the Righteous Host's favor.

You can run this adventure as a standalone event in which you and your players participate in one of the most important battles in the history of the World of Greyhawk campaign setting. You might also have the characters travel through time, perhaps as a result of a magical catastrophe, to the days leading up to the legendary battle. Even if the characters are not adventuring in Greyhawk, magic makes everything and anything possible.

If you don't want to run this adventure on Oerth, you can use the missions and the setup of two armies facing each other as the basis for a completely different conflict set in the world of your choosing. Change the names of parties involved, as well as other details specifically related to Greyhawk.

Running the Adventure

"The Battle of Emridy Meadows" is a collection of missions, all of which take place in and around Emridy Meadows (also referred to as the Meadows) before and during the eponymous battle. The Meadows are located south of the Velverdyva River, along the edge of the Gnarley Forest where it meets the Kron Hills, not far from the villages of Hommlet and Nulb. Although the battle takes its name from the Meadows, it is a moving conflict that spills out into other nearby areas.

The missions included here take place at different times and in different places over several days, with little time between. Characters have a number of tasks to complete in a short time, so keep the pressure on. They can't take a long rest after every encounter.

You need the D&D Next playtest rules or *Ghosts of Dragonspear Castle*™ (which includes playtest rules) to run this adventure and the bulk of the monsters mentioned herein. Any new adversaries created for this adventure are included in an appendix at the end of the adventure. Whenever a monster is first referenced, its name appears in **bold type**.

Background

In 566 Common Year (CY), evil cultists built a chapel near the village of Nulb. The unholy site attracted worshipers, bandits, orcs, gnolls, and other undesirables. Eventually, the cultists expanded the structure until it became the Temple of Elemental Evil. By 569 CY, their activities had brought them to the attention of the good people of Furyondy and Veluna, as well as the dwarves of the Lortmil Mountains and the gnomes of the Kron Hills.

Prince Thrommel IV of Furyondy assembled an army, which became known as the Righteous Host, and marched it southeast from Verbobonc to confront the growing threat. Along the way, Thrommel made alliances with dwarves and gnomes, who added their numbers to the host.

Thrommel, leading the combined forces as Marshall of Furyondy, is now camped in one of several large clearings in Emridy Meadows, a day's march from the temple. Scouts report that the forces of the temple outnumber the Righteous Host three to one. Despite this revelation, Thrommel believes he can exploit the enemy's fractious nature and lack of discipline to win the war. His counselors, though agreeable to his plans, have insisted on calling in help to carry out key missions they believe can shift the odds in the Righteous Host's favor. Enter the characters!

Overview

The adventure unfolds against the backdrop of one of the World of Greyhawk setting's most important conflicts. At the Battle of Emridy Meadows, the Righteous Host, a coalition of good humanoids, stands fast against the forces of Elemental Evil. During the adventure, the characters have several chances to aid the Righteous Host in its struggles, to seek a swift and decisive victory over evil, and to determine the outcome of this famous conflict.

Rather than fight on the front lines alongside the humans, dwarves, gnomes, and (eventually) elves of the Righteous Host, the characters undertake three critical missions to help Prince Thrommel and his forces gain the advantage. How the characters acquit themselves during these missions directly affects the outcome when the two armies meet.

Mission 1: Gnaragg's Den

The first mission sees the adventurers confronting Gnaragg the Dog King in his foul den. A vicious and savage gnoll, he rules through fear and strength. His death should throw the gnolls into disarray as they fight among themselves for leadership.

Mission 2: Kell the Eldest

The second mission has the adventurers intercepting a lich named Kell the Eldest as he travels by coach through the Gnarley Forest. The undead wizard plans to lend his considerable necromantic power to the cause of evil. Defeating Kell deals a serious blow to the forces of Elemental Evil and keeps them from swelling their ranks with undead troops.

Along the way, the party has a chance to rescue an envoy named Sir Geon from an ambush. Saving the envoy's life lets him complete his mission to convince the elves of the Gnarley Forest to join forces with the Righteous Host.

Mission 3: Raiders' Warren

The final mission involves tracking down an escaped spy who has stolen a ritual book. Prince Thrommel and the Righteous Host must use a ritual in the book to trap Zuggtmoy in the temple's depths. Without the book, the ritual cannot be completed. It falls to the characters to retrieve the tome. The adventurers track the spy to a supposedly abandoned farmhouse on the outskirts of the dangerous village of Nulb. Characters exploring the farmhouse eventually discover a secret underground temple there.

The Battle of Emridy Meadows

If the adventurers have any lingering doubts about the outcome of the war, they can take to the battlefield and risk everything to push the Righteous Host toward victory.

Tracking Quests

Whether or not the forces of good prevail at the Battle of Emridy Meadows depends on the successful completion of several adventure quests.

As the adventurers undertake missions, you will keep track of whether they fail or succeed on certain quests. At the end of each successful mission, Thrommel spreads word of the party's success, which has the effect of strengthening the Righteous Host's morale. If the characters fail to complete their quests, Thrommel keeps quiet but rumors quickly spread through the ranks to undermine morale.

To keep track of the party's impact on the outcome of the battle, use the Quest Tracker table. The quest tracker begins at -5. The tracker moves one step to the right each time the adventurers succeed on a quest. If the characters do not complete a quest, they incur a quest failure and move the tracker one step to the left.

At the end of the adventure, roll a d20 and add the modifier from the quest tracker. If the result is 15 or higher, the Righteous Host defeats the forces of Elemental Evil. Otherwise, evil triumphs and the world is forever changed.

QUEST TRACKER

Penalty			Start				Bonus
-20	-15	-10	-5	0	+5	+10	+15

Important NPCs

The adventurers are likely to interact with several important nonplayer characters (NPCs) throughout the adventure.

Prince Thrommel IV

Marshall of Furyondy (Male Human)

Prince Thrommel, head of the war council and leader of the forces that make up the Righteous Host, represents all that is good and noble in humanity. A true and faithful paladin of his god, Rao, he has pledged to wipe out the Temple of Elemental Evil. Through sheer force of will, Thrommel has pulled together a worthy army and marched south to confront the darkness.

Thrommel believes his Righteous Host can defeat the forces of the temple, but he tempers his convictions with the dire reality of the situation. He knows his army lacks numbers and experience, and he has a difficult time keeping the egos of his commanders in check. He believes that a few victories—no matter how small—will unite the Righteous Host, strengthening the resolve of his troops in time to meet the greater threat. This has led him to seek unconventional methods for weakening the temple's forces. A few key strikes where the enemy is most vulnerable will bolster morale.

Thrommel has few opportunities to engage the adventurers. He is much too busy making the myriad decisions required to run an army, which he prefers to lead from the front. As such, he trusts subordinates to give the characters their marching orders and ensure that their basic needs are met. He lets the other members of the council know they should make every effort to help the characters, because their successes might ensure the Righteous Host's victory.

Viscount Wilfrick

Viscount of Verbobonc (Male Human)

His Noble Lordship and Defender of the Faith is as serious as his titles indicate. Somber and consumed with worry over the magnitude of the threat to the people of Verbobonc, Wilfrick presents a dour face and a sober assessment of the situation whenever asked.

Anyone seeing Wilfrick and Jeet Jimbleclap together can see the tension between the two, owing to recent and unresolved difficulties between Verbobonc and the gnomes of the Kron Hills. Verbobonc would annex the hills and their people, while the gnomes want nothing to do with human rule. Their alliance is uneasy at best, and simple discussions can unravel into bitter arguments. Thus far, Wilfrick has tolerated the gnomes' rebelliousness and desire for independence, but Jeet tries his patience.

Wilfrick's faith underlies everything he does. A devout and pious individual, he channels his convictions into his leadership decisions. He hides his anxieties behind a noble, devoted, and disciplined facade—the very image of strong but stern leadership. He cares for the soldiers under his command but does not tolerate failure. Under most circumstances, second chances are unthinkable. Wilfrick's pride will not allow him to look foolish or weak, and he is thus prone to overcompensate when he thinks people doubt him.

Viscount Wilfrick warms to clerics and paladins, offering supplies, religious items, and other resources to anyone he deems worthy and appropriately deferential.

Serten

Cleric of Saint Cuthbert (Male Human)

The threat posed by the Temple of Elemental Evil has drawn the attention of the Citadel of Eight—an alliance of individuals working together to maintain balance between the most extreme powers of good and evil, law and chaos. The Citadel, under the guidance of the archmage Mordenkainen and his apprentice Bigby, has dispatched agents to watch the conflict. Foremost of these agents is Serten, a powerful cleric of Saint Cuthbert and long-standing member of the Citadel. Serten has only recently arrived, but his magic has already proved instrumental in persuading a spy named Dennek to divulge important secrets about the enemy's plans.

Serten is out of his depth and should not be representing the Citadel in this conflict. Never an intellectual giant, he stumbles through life, letting his sense of righteousness and courage land him in trouble. Although the rest of the Citadel recognizes his shortcomings, Serten wants above all to prove his worth, and he thinks he can handle any threat from the temple on his own.

Serten is under strict orders from the Citadel to assist Prince Thrommel and not engage the enemy directly, keeping the Citadel informed and awaiting instructions. He stretches the interpretation of these orders and sees himself as one of Prince Thrommel's key advisors. He also looks for opportunities to prove his worth in battle, putting himself unnecessarily in harm's way.

Tall, muscled, and handsome, Serten makes an impression. He wears plate armor adorned with Saint Cuthbert's starburst and carries a stout staff capped with a platinum ferrule at each end.

Dennek

Elemental Evil Spy (Male Human)

Dennek was captured while trying to gather intelligence on the Righteous Host. He now languishes in chains as Prince Thrommel's prisoner. After a recent interrogation by Serten, Dennek sold out his evil masters, offering vital intelligence in exchange for the cleric's promise not to execute him. The information provided by Dennek under duress has given the Righteous Host a fighting chance against the forces of Elemental Evil. In fact, Dennek's intelligence is what prompts Thrommel to hire adventurers to undertake special missions that could turn the tide of battle in the Righteous Host's favor.

Small, scruffy, and snaggletoothed, Dennek wears filthy clothing stained by his own blood. As long as he remains a prisoner of the Righteous Host, he sports shackles and chains.

Dennek suspects that other spies have infiltrated the Righteous Host, and he fears that he might become the target of an assassination plot if word of his betrayal becomes known. Consequently, he's unable to sleep and appears jittery when questioned.

Girt Stonebones

Lortmil Mountains Representative (Male Dwarf)

Girt Stonebones represents the dwarves of the Lortmil Mountains on Thrommel's war council and leads his people in battle. Loud, brash, and supremely confident in his and his soldiers' abilities, Girt believes force applied to the right place can solve any problem. He has no doubt that the dwarves can put down the demon-worshiping rabble and knock down the eyesore known as the Temple of Elemental Evil.

As arrogant and overconfident as Girt Stonebones is, he is no fool. He knows his dwarves are strong, effective fighters, but he won't throw their lives away without a plan. In council meetings, he listens and remains silent until it's his time to speak. When he does, he loudly calls for bold action.

Girt Stonebones always refers to himself in the third person and always by his full name. He comes to a decision without wasting time. He considers any pronouncement he makes to be sound, and any matter related to it, settled.

Jeet Jimbleclap

Kron Hills Representative (Female Gnome)

Representing the gnomes of the Kron Hills on the war council, Jeet joined the Righteous Host after she heard her people's concerns and fears about the growing threat to their homes. Never one to let a sore fester, she decided it was time to do something about it. She answered Thrommel's call for aid by personally leading a small force of gnomes to join the cause.

Like most gnomes, Jeet finds humor in anything—even the battle to come. She's practical about her people's contributions and knows that her small force might not be enough to help turn the tide. She also believes her people's cunning, magical talent, and tenacity will make some difference.

Jeet has little use for titles or honorifics, finding such things foolish and silly. Gnome warriors call her "mother" or "grandmother," while those on the war council call her "Lady Jeet," which she finds amusing.

Kind but tough, Jeet approaches challenges from a practical standpoint. More than any other member of the war council, she has no time for pointless formality and has no problem interrupting others when they go on too long or suggest something she deems stupid. She understands the customs of her allies, however, so when she feels the need to interrupt, she does so with as much respect as possible.

Elderly even by gnome standards, Jeet shows no physical impairment from her great age, and only her thinning white hair hints that her best years might

be behind her. She passes the time between meetings reviewing reports. She's never far from her white raven companion, Smoke.

Emridy Meadows Encounters

Each hour of game time that the adventurers spend seeking or traveling to the sites of their missions is considered one exploration turn. During each exploration turn, roll 3d6 and consult the following table. Alternatively, simply choose an option each turn.

3d6	Encounter
3-12	No encounter
13	1d4 manticores
14	2d8 human warriors and 1d2 ogres
15	2d8 orcs, 1 orc leader, and 1d2 ogres
16	Gnaragg's pack
17	Pit trap
18	3d6 stirges

Gnaragg's Pack: The characters hear heavy footfalls and the cackling of gnolls 1d6 rounds before the creatures appear. The hunting pack consists of 2d8 **gnolls** led by **Gnaragg** and his **displacer beast** mount. Gnaragg's displacer beast is particularly large and has 78 hit points. While Gnaragg is riding the beast, it cannot use its Displacement trait.

If either the Dog King or his displacer beast mount drops to half hit points or fewer, they both flee and return to their lair (see "Mission 1: Gnaragg's Den"). Any remaining gnolls cover the Dog King's escape before scattering into the wilderness.

Treat this encounter as "no encounter" if Gnaragg has been defeated.

Pit Trap: To slow the Righteous Host, evil bandits have dug and concealed 10-foot-deep pits all over Emridy Meadows and the surrounding hills.

Choose a character at random. That character must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot the hidden pit trap. If the check fails, the character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall into the pit, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and 7 (2d6) piercing damage from the wooden spikes embedded in the pit's floor.

Stirges: If this encounter occurs during the day, the adventurers stumble on the site of a recent battle. Half the **stirges** are feeding on the corpses of the dead, gorging themselves on blood, while the rest flap around. If the characters keep their distance, the stirges ignore them. Otherwise, the stirges attack.

If this encounter occurs at night, the stirges are drawn to the adventurers by their light. They swoop down and attack the characters in their camp or while they are traveling overland. If the characters have no light sources, they hear the stirges flapping past but the creatures don't attack.

Beginning the Adventure

The adventure begins with a summons to the war council. Characters who have already committed to the cause of the Righteous Host know that morale is low. The host's soldiers believed they had been assembled to put down an upstart temple defended by cultists and bandits. Now, a day's march from the temple, scouts have returned with reports describing a vast horde of savage humanoids and wicked monsters, bolstered by demons, elementals, and dark magic. Fear has spread throughout the Righteous Host like a disease, and the characters can see that fear written on the soldiers' faces.

Whether new to the Host or not, the characters have been approached by one of the war council's members for help. The adventurers' experience working as a team suits them for important missions that

Involving the Characters

The adventure assumes the characters are already members of the Righteous Host, having answered Prince Thrommel's call to arms or joined out of obligation to their gods or nations. Alternatively, the characters might become involved in other ways.

If you're playing a campaign set in the World of Greyhawk but in a later era, you can bring the characters into the adventure by means of time travel, chronomancy, or magical mishap. The characters might come across a powerful scroll while on another adventure or travel through a portal that flings them back through time. Mordenkainen or another member of the Citadel of Eight might call the adventurers from across time and other dimensions to gain their aid against one of the greatest threats to Oerth in its long history.

For groups playing in other campaign settings, you can have a portal in Sigil lead to Oerth or allow adventurers to find a spelljamming helm and vessel they can use to travel from one crystal sphere to another. If the characters are newcomers to Oerth, you will need to introduce them to the Righteous Host. The characters could appear in the midst of Thrommel's army or in the nearby village of Hommlet, where they hear rumors about what's going on.

You can also easily adapt the adventure to a completely different setting by changing names, altering the nature of the conflict, and reworking the story to suit your world. The essence of the adventure—an epic conflict between the armies of good and evil—can take place anywhere.

will give the Righteous Host an advantage in the coming battle.

The characters are brought to the *Leomund's secure shelter* where Prince Thrommel and his war council meet. This magic structure resembles a hunting lodge from the outside and appears even larger on the inside. Within the lodge, the characters meet the five members of the war council—Prince Thrommel, Viscount Wilfrick, Serten, Girt Stonebones, and Jeet Jimbleclap. Thrommel introduces any NPCs the characters do not already know.

The lodge's interior is warm thanks to a fire burning in a hearth. A round table commands the room's center, surrounded by seats for the councilors and each member of the party. Maps depicting Emridy Meadows cover the table, showing the disposition of enemy forces in addition to the lay of the land. Reports of spies have placed the council on alert, and several stone-faced guards stand against the walls, hands on weapons and ready for anything.

Roleplaying the War Council

Use the descriptions of the councilors in "Important NPCs," above, to bring them to life as individuals, giving the characters opportunities to speak with each NPC. The players should get the sense that the Righteous Host has competent leaders who don't always see eye to eye, but who respect each other nonetheless.

Thrommel's Request

Read or paraphrase the following after introductions have been made and the characters take their seats.

Prince Thrommel gets straight to the point, "Last night, we caught an enemy spy named Dennek. We have him chained up in a wagon nearby, under heavy guard. He fears for his life and has wisely supplied us with good information regarding our enemies' plans.

"Their forces outnumber us three to one. I remain confident in our chances of victory, however, for all reports indicate those forces are undisciplined, untrained, and prone to infighting.

"We plan to use those weaknesses against the cultists by eliminating the leader of the gnolls, a foul creature called Gnaragg the Dog King. Capturing or killing him is certain to set his lieutenants against each other until one establishes dominance, which will take more than a few days—time we can use to break the enemy.

"Can you do this?"

When the characters accept, Thrommel gives them the location of Gnaragg's den. Jeet supplies each party member with a *potion of invisibility*. (Emphasize the presence of her raven, Smoke, in this exchange, so that the characters recognize the bird in mission 3.) In addition, the characters can ask questions of the council, request mundane gear you wish them to have, and take care of anything else they might need to do before getting underway.

Questioning Dennek

To start the mission, the prince suggests that the characters question Dennek under Serten's supervision. The captured spy was the one who told the council about Gnaragg and provided them with the location of the Dog King's lair. Dennek is chained inside an armored wagon parked a short distance away from the war council's lodge. Serten escorts the party to the wagon, which is guarded by four heavily armed dwarves who report to Girt Stonebones.

Dennek was roughly handled by Serten during his last interrogation and appears nervous in the cleric's presence. If the characters question the captured enemy spy, each successful DC 15 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check convinces him to reveal one additional secret.

Secret 1: Gnaragg's Advisor

"The Dog King has a gnoll concubine who advises him. She watches over the lair when the Dog King is out hunting. Even if you kill old Gnaragg, she might have the influence to keep the gnolls together for the battle. You should kill her, too."

Secret 2: Hidden Entrance

"There's a pair of dead trees and a patch of thorn bushes around the northeast side of the Dog King's hill, behind which you'll find a narrow tunnel. It's unguarded and leads to Gnaragg's lair."

Secret 3: The Dog King's Mount

"The Dog King has a pet displacer beast that he rides into battle. The beast is a large and fierce specimen by all accounts."

Mission 1: Gnaragg's Den

Gnaragg's den is a series of dry caves carved into an otherwise unremarkable hill. The caves are unlit.

Gnaragg, several gnolls, and his displacer beast mount are out hunting, but they return as the characters explore the caves. If Gnaragg is slain or captured and his fate becomes known, his advisor and concubine Norghu (area 5) takes command. Capturing or killing her ensures the successful completion of the party's mission.

Traveling to the Den

It takes 2 hours for the characters to reach the hill. Each hour, be sure to check for random encounters (see "Emridy Meadows Encounters").

The Gnoll Lair

The characters can easily get to within sight of the gnoll lair without being seen, allowing them to survey the main entrance or to scout around the hill.

1. Evil Encampment

Several crude tents are pitched in front of a cave entrance at the base of a steep, grass-covered hill. Numerous filthy humans and gnolls move through the encampment. A charred pig roasts on a spit above a fire pit as smoke and embers rise into the air.

Twelve **human warriors** (evil bandits) and twelve **gnolls** are present when the characters arrive. At any given time, half are inside the tents and huts, while the other half mill around the campfire (area 2) and the cave entrance (area 3).

The humans and gnolls don't get along. Characters who take the time to spy on the camp from a safe distance witness the occasional argument. Someone on the human side always defuses the tension before it erupts into a bloody brawl.

If the characters sow discord among the gnolls and humans, 1d8 humans and 1d4 gnolls die in the resulting melee before Norghu emerges from area 5 and puts a stop to the bloodshed. If Norghu is killed or otherwise incapacitated before she can intercede, all the humans perish, and 1d6 gnolls survive.

Large Tents: These two patchwork tents flank the cave entrance and are claimed by the human bandits. Each tent contains six bedrolls and several backpacks containing rations and worthless possessions.

Small Huts: Surrounding the larger tents are several crude wood-and-hide huts that the gnolls use for shelter. Each hut contains two flea-ridden fur pallets and piles of gnawed animal bones.

Treasure: Each human warrior carries a pouch containing 1d10 gp.

The first time one or more characters search a tent or hut, roll a d6 and consult the Treasure table to determine what they might find.

TREASURE

d6	Treasure
1-3	None
4	1d4 casks of dwarven ale (50 gp each)
5	1d4 crates of iron rations (25 gp each)
6	Treasure map (site is 1d6 hours away); roll to determine what's found there.

d6	Treasure
1-3	An old sack containing 3d10 × 10 ep
4-5	A wooden coffer containing 2d6 50-gp gems
6	An iron box containing 2d4 *potions of healing*

2. Fire Pit

A charred pig is impaled on a spit above this shallow fire pit.

3. Cave Entrance

This cave entrance is festooned with human, dwarf, and halfling skulls jammed into cubbyholes carved into the rough-hewn walls.

4. Displacer Beast Den

The floor of this large alcove is strewn with gnawed bones.

When Gnaragg is in the lair, his displacer beast sleeps here. Characters who search the den find a few tufts of blue-black fur and see claw marks on the walls.

Characters who make a lot of noise in this area alert Norghu in area 5.

5. Lair of the Dog King

This cave belongs to Gnaragg and Norghu.

A large pallet of furs fills one corner of this cavern. The rest of the cave is strewn with supplies stolen from caravans, including a few scattered crates, boxes, and sacks.

Norghu is a **gnoll leader** pack lord, and she rules the lair in Gnaragg's absence. When defending her home, she fights to the death.

Treasure: Under the pallet of furs is a pouch containing 25 gp and a scorched wooden jewelry box with a broken lock. It contains four silver bracelets (10 gp each), a pair of gold earrings shaped like tiny dragons (50 gp for the pair), a silver necklace festooned with tiny teardrops of moonstone (100 gp), and an electrum tiara set with three small fire opals (250 gp).

6. Shaft Cavern

If the characters approach from the south, read the following.

A stretch of tunnel here ends at a 5-foot-wide hole in the floor, forming the mouth of a shaft that descends at a 60-degree angle. The shaft has abundant handholds and footholds.

If the characters approach from the north, read the following.

The shaft emerges into an empty cavern that connects to a tunnel ahead.

The shaft connecting the upper and lower levels of Gnaragg's den is 20 feet long. Characters can ascend and descend the shaft easily.

7. Dead End

The ceiling of this tunnel collapsed some time ago, filling it with rubble. If characters disturb the rubble, a **gray ooze** seeps forth and attacks.

THE DOG KING'S RETURN

At some point during the characters' exploration of Gnaragg's den, the Dog King and his hunting party return. This event can happen at a dramatic moment of your choosing, or you can randomly determine Gnaragg's arrival by rolling a d6 and consulting the table below.

d6	Gnaragg's hunting party returns when . . .
1	The party enters area 4.
2	The party defeats Norghu (area 5).
3	The party reaches area 7.
4	The party reaches area 9.
5	The party finishes exploring area 14.
6	The party prepares to leave the den.

Gnaragg begins the encounter mounted on the back of his displacer beast, which has 78 hit points due to its great size. A posse of 2d8 gnolls accompanies the Dog King and his mount.

If Gnaragg realizes that something is amiss, he dismounts and orders his gnolls to circle around and cover the hidden entrance (area 8). Meanwhile, Gnaragg and his displacer beast head into the tunnels and try to drive interlopers toward that area.

If the characters try to flee, Gnaragg's hunting skills allow him to follow their trail. The Dog King mounts up and chases after his elusive quarry, catching up to the adventurers somewhere in the wilderness.

8. Hidden Entrance

If the characters learned about this entrance from Dennek, they can find it easily. Otherwise, the entrance can be found with a DC 10 Intelligence (Search) check made by a character surveying the hill.

On the northeast flank of the hill, nestled between two dead trees, is a cave mouth obscured by thorn bushes and weeds.

The tunnel has a floor of packed dirt. Any character examining the floor sees tracks belonging to barefoot humanoids with clawed toes. The tracks go in both directions and belong to the vicious ghouls that dwell in area 10.

9. Stench of Death

This tunnel reeks of death, with the odor becoming more intense toward the south.

10. Ghoul Lair

A horrid stench fills this cave, which is littered with the gnawed bones of animals and humanoids.

If the characters approach from the north, add the following description.

In the corner of the cavern, a 5-foot-wide shaft ascends through solid stone at a 60-degree angle. The shaft has abundant handholds and footholds.

Seven **ghouls** lair in this small cave during daylight hours. At night, 1d4 ghouls are present, with the rest out hunting for food. Ghouls pursue prey beyond the confines of their lair, but they stop short of areas 4 and 5.

The shaft connecting the upper and lower levels of Gnaragg's den is 20 feet long. Characters can ascend and descend the shaft easily.

Treasure: The ghouls wear macabre jewelry made of the hair, bones, and baubles taken from their past victims. Among each ghoul's finery, characters can find gems and coins worth 1d20 gp.

11. Dead End

This tunnel tapers until it stops at a dead end. The walls of the last 10 feet contain small deposits of quartz that sparkle when they catch the light. If the characters spend 1 hour digging, they can extract quartz worth a total of 10 gp.

12. Natural Reservoir

The eastern wall of the tunnel opens up to form a round cave with a shallow pool of water covering most of the floor.

In its center, the pool has a maximum depth of 3 feet.

13. Pool

The tunnel widens toward the west, where a pool of water has formed. Its source is not readily apparent.

This pool is actually a **water elemental** bound to this area by an ancient spell. It rails against its captivity by rising up and attacking any creature that tries to walk by. The elemental can pursue fleeing creatures, but after going 50 feet in either direction, it is magically compelled to return to this cave.

14. Subterranean Lake

The tunnel comes to an end twenty feet above the surface of an enormous underground grotto, filled wall to wall with dark water.

The grotto is roughly 500 feet in diameter. Its walls are damp and slick, and the ceiling reaches its apex 30 feet above the water's surface. The lake is 50 feet deep on average.

Blind fish, pale crustaceans, and other harmless creatures inhabit the water. The lake is also home to a pair of aquatic **trolls** (scrags). In addition to having the statistics of an ordinary troll, a scrag has a swim speed of 30 feet and can breathe normally while underwater. Being underwater imposes no penalty to its attack rolls and ability checks.

Treasure: The scrags' sunken lair contains a rotted wooden chest. Inside, resting on a bed of 400 gp, is an untarnished *sky helm*. Adorned with stylized bird wings, this silver helm allows its wearer to fly up to 100 feet three times per day. The helm also grants its wearer the ability to speak and understand Auran, but has a curious quirk that forces the wearer to speak only Auran whenever it is worn. The wearer thinks he or she is speaking normally.

Aftermath

After dealing with Gnaragg the Dog King, the characters can return to Prince Thrommel's camp and make their report. They might have completed two quests.

Quest 1: Defeat Gnaragg

If the characters capture or slay Gnaragg the Dog King, they succeed on this quest. Otherwise, they incur a quest failure.

Quest 2: Defeat Norghu

If the characters capture or slay Norghu, they succeed on this quest. Otherwise, they incur a quest failure.

Mission 2: Kell the Eldest

Back at Prince Thrommel's camp, preparations for the coming battle are underway. Warriors busily sharpen weapons, fletchers make arrows, and civilians tend to the food, laundry, and other needs of the camp. Prince Thrommel has left the encampment to meet with troops and inspect various fortifications.

Inside the *Leomund's secure shelter* where the war council meets, the characters find Viscount Wilfrick seated at the table with Serten and another cleric of Saint Cuthbert named Hrudek. Serten and Hrudek gladly tend to the adventurers' injuries and perform rites for the dead. After everyone has been tended to, Serten calls for food and drink for the adventurers while Wilfrick listens to their report.

After the characters make their report, Wilfrick gives them their next mission.

Wilfrick pours himself a cup of tea as he spells out your next mission. "Our enemies are disorganized and their leaders know it. They've forged an alliance with a wizard-general lich named Kell the Eldest and have summoned him to join their army—perhaps even to lead it.

"We've been tracking Kell and his escorts since they arrived in Safeton by boat. They now travel overland by coach through the Gnarley Forest. The forest elves have remained neutral in our conflict. We've already sent an envoy to petition for their help against the forces of Elemental Evil, but until we've secured an alliance, we can't rely on the elves to deal with Kell."

As Viscount Wilfrick speaks, Serten grows increasingly impatient before finally interrupting. "We need you to travel as quickly as possible to the Gnarley Forest, intercept the undead wizard, and destroy him. Because Kell is a lich, he will reform in a matter of days. But by the time he does, the Battle of Emridy Meadows will be won."

Wilfrick and Serten have no specific information about Kell or his escort other than the route they are taking through the Gnarley Forest. Serten knows that liches are powerful and that Kell has opposed other members of the Citadel of Eight in the past.

If the adventurers accept the mission, Serten gives them five vials of holy water. Wilfrick then provides the characters with fresh horses for the journey to the Gnarley Forest.

Ride to the Gnarley Forest

It takes 4 hours for the adventurers to travel from the Righteous Host's main encampment to the edge of the Gnarley Forest on horseback. Each hour, be sure to check for random encounters (see "Emridy Meadows Encounters").

At some point during their journey, the characters happen on the following scene.

Along the trail to the east, evidence of past engagements can be seen: burned homesteads, slaughtered livestock, and the corpses of soldiers. Suddenly, a horn sounds in the distance. As you crest a low hill, you see mounted scouts of the Righteous Host skirmishing with heavily armored orc scouts.

Six **orogs** are battling six **human warriors** astride unarmored **horses**. The orogs attack only the riders, hoping to claim the horses for themselves.

If the characters keep their distance and watch the battle unfold, two orogs and four humans are killed before the remaining humans and horses break off and flee in the direction of the Righteous Host encampment. The surviving orogs loot the dead before marching off in another direction.

If the characters intervene, it takes them 3 rounds of breakneck riding to move within 100 feet of the battle, by which time two humans and one orog have already been killed.

The leader of the cavalry patrol is a promising young soldier named Garren Highmoor. If the

characters help Garren defeat the orogs, he is grateful for their assistance and is sure to mention them by name when he reports to his superiors. In addition to his other equipment, Garren carries a horn and a *potion of healing* marked with the seal of Saint Cuthbert.

Treasure: Each orog carries 2d10 gp. One orog carries a sack containing six live chickens.

Sir Geon's Quest

After 4 hours on horseback, the adventurers reach the edge of the Gnarley Forest.

The trail leads straight to the Gnarley Forest, passing through a foreboding wall of trees and into thick fog that engulfs the interior.

After 1 hour of riding through the Gnarley Forest, the adventurers experience the following.

Frightened horses with saddles but no riders bolt through the forest. They race by among the trees before vanishing into the mist. Somewhere up ahead, the sounds of battle can be heard.

As the characters head toward the battle, read the following.

In a clearing north of the forest trail, an ogre and five powerful orogs cut down soldiers in the livery of Furyondy, the same arms worn by Prince Thrommel. The last survivor is a knight, bloodied but standing fast.

Sir Geon of Furyondy (use the **human war chief** statistics) was traveling with his entourage to petition the elves of the Gnarley Forest to join the Righteous Host. They were ambushed by an **ogre** and seven **orogs**, two of which have been slain. One orog has already been reduced to 7 hit points.

Sir Geon is the sole survivor of his party. As the characters approach, he sees them and cries out, "Help me! I must make it through!" Sir Geon has 15 hit points remaining.

If the characters don't aid Sir Geon, the monsters cut him down. If Geon fails to meet with the elves, his failure is also a quest failure for the party.

Elven Envoys

If he survives the fight, Sir Geon catches his breath, thanks the characters for saving him, and prepares to head off into the forest again. If the characters mention they're working with Thrommel and the Righteous Host, Geon tells them about his mission. Just as he finishes, the elves arrive.

Several elves step out from the trees, short swords in hand and longbows slung over their backs. "We heard fighting, but it seems we are too late. Can we help in any way?"

The six **wood elves**—three males and three females—carry water and bandages. They can dress wounds and stabilize the dying. Sir Geon addresses the elves with the following.

Sir Geon steps forward. "I represent Prince Thrommel of Furyondy, leader of the Righteous Host. He asks the elves of the Gnarley Forest to join him in battle against the forces of Elemental Evil. As you can see, those forces pose a threat to all of us."

The elves appear sympathetic, and one of them replies, "Collect your goods and come with us. We shall see that the bodies of your soldiers are returned to your people."

If the characters warn the elves about Kell the Eldest or petition them for aid in intercepting the lich, read the following.

"In a place not far from here," says one of the elves, "the trail passes between two halves of a giant rock that was split by the gods long ago. Plenty of cover and high ground makes it the perfect location for an ambush."

Persuading the elves to join in fighting Kell requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check. To complete his quest, Sir Geon must speak with the leaders of the elf tribes. For that, he needs an elven escort. Having the elves escort him to the nearest elven settlement takes several hours, but Geon yields to the adventurers' wishes if need be.

Ambushing Kell

With or without the elves' guidance, the adventurers find the perfect place to ambush Kell the Eldest. When the characters reach the site, read the following.

Ahead stands an enormous, moss-covered boulder that looks out of place among the trees. The great rock is split in two—half of it embedded in the wall of a steep ridge to the north; the other sunk just beyond the lip of a gully to the south. The trail passes between the cloven rock, clinging to the gully's edge. Ancient trees grow all around, their gnarly limbs begging to be climbed.

The site offers several tactical advantages. Characters can climb a tree or scale the giant boulder without needing to make a check. Furthermore, the ridge that overlooks the trail is high enough to provide cover against attacks from creatures on the trail.

If the elves pointed out the ambush site, the characters arrive there 1 hour before Kell does. Otherwise, Kell's carriage arrives 20 minutes after the characters find the ambush site.

When Kell approaches, read the following.

The clopping of hooves foreshadows the arrival of a black coach pulled by two skeletal horses. The horses slow their advance as they approach the cloven rock. Two guards, their flesh gray and withered, clutch the reins while two more cling to rungs on the back of the coach.

As the coach rolls forward slowly, the undead guards appear vigilant, perhaps sensing that something is amiss. Black drapes that cover the windows of the coach remain drawn.

Four **wights** guard the coach—one driving, one riding in front, and two hanging off the back. Inside the coach is a fifth **wight** that serves as a personal bodyguard to Kell the Eldest, a human **lich**. The skeletal horses have the statistics of normal **horses** but they are undead—resistant to piercing damage, vulnerable to bludgeoning damage, immune to disease and poison, and they cannot be frightened or put to sleep. They attack characters who move close to them and the carriage.

If one or more adventurers make no effort to hide, the wights spot them automatically. Each hidden character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If no character fails the check, the wights guide the coach slowly through the gap between the cloven rock, moving 20 feet per turn. If any character fails, the two wights on the back of the carriage rush toward those characters and attack. The driver then ushers the coach forward 40 feet per turn.

When combat erupts, Kell the Eldest casts *invisibility* on himself. He then orders his wight bodyguard to exit the coach and leave the door open so that he can slip out unseen. The lich remains invisible until he finds an advantageous location, from which he casts *mirror image* and unleashes his most destructive spells (*cloudkill*, *fireball*, and *lightning bolt*).

If the characters retreat before they can destroy Kell, the lich returns to his coach and commands

the surviving wights to spirit him from the forest as quickly as possible.

Treasure: If he drops to 0 hit points, Kell turns to dust, leaving behind his clothing and possessions. The lich wears ornate black robes stitched with gold embroidery (250 gp) and a medallion shaped like a demon's skull with ruby eyes on a gold chain (1,000 gp). He also carries a pouch of spell components.

Kell's coach contains a secret compartment that requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Search) check to find. Inside is a *horn of blasting* that Kell intended to give to his allies at the Temple of Elemental Evil.

Aftermath

Destroying the lich's corporeal form ensures that Kell the Eldest cannot lead the forces of Elemental Evil against the Righteous Host. After they defeat Kell and his wights, the characters can return to Thrommel's camp and report.

If Sir Geon completes his quest, he persuades the elves of the Gnarley Forest to join the Righteous Host. If the characters insist on delaying his quest until after the ambush, or if Sir Geon was killed, the characters can try to negotiate with the elves on Thrommel's behalf. Convincing them to join the Righteous Host requires a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

Quest 3: Defeat Kell the Eldest

If the characters slay Kell the Eldest, they succeed on this quest. Otherwise, they incur a quest failure.

Quest 4: Gain Elven Allies

If the elves join the Righteous Host, the characters succeed on this quest. Otherwise, they incur a quest failure.

Mission 3: The Raiders' Warren

With their mission to the Gnarley Forest concluded, the adventurers head back to the Righteous Host's encampment to report on their success or failure. When they arrive, they are greeted by a terrible sight.

The Righteous Host encampment is a ruined field of flattened tents and destroyed supply wagons. Prince Thrommel's lodge is gone as though it never existed, and all around are the corpses of slaughtered horses, humans, dwarves, orcs, and ogres, with a few hill giants and burned trolls interspersed among the dead. The armored wagon that once held the prisoner, Dennek, has been knocked on its side, its door torn from its iron hinges.

As you survey the scene, a white raven that you recognize as Smoke, the companion of the gnome Jeet, drops from the sky and lands on the wreckage. It caws, takes to the air, then lands on a hollowed-out tree stump and pecks at it.

If the characters inspect the hollow tree stump, they find a rolled-up parchment with a message on it.

Tragedy dogs our steps, my friends. The enemy tried to intercept Prince Thrommel as he returned to the camp, and although he escaped, they came after him in force. Our cleric, Serten, was struck down by a foul demon in the thick of battle. He fought bravely, a true hero, yet the loss is keenly felt. The rest of us are safe, and Thrommel is leading us to another encampment.

The spy, Dennek, has escaped and stolen a tome bound in red leather and entitled Spiral of Darkness: A Demon Binder's Guide to the Abyss. *We need this book to trap the demon Zuggtmoy, who we have learned is the foul secret power behind the rise of the temple. Smoke followed Dennek and knows where he has gone. The raven will guide you where you need to go.*

When you have the tome, Smoke will lead you back to me, assuming I'm not dead. That would be some bad luck, eh?

–Jeet

Smoke leads the characters to Nulb, a trip of 3 hours by horse. Because of the recent fighting in the Meadows, no random encounters occur en route.

The Village of Nulb

Nulb is an isolated farming settlement populated by people who prefer to be left alone. Although it might appear quiet and tranquil from a distance, the village holds many dark secrets and has sinister, unspoken ties to the Temple of Elemental Evil.

A muddy road follows the river of Imeryd's Run and leads north to a riverside village in the middle of nowhere. Its cottages are built from turf, mud brick, crudely hewn logs, and old timber from boats. No signs announce the settlement's name, and haggard locals eye you suspiciously.

Spies working for the Temple of Elemental Evil have infiltrated the village and planted seeds of fear and distrust. The villagers neither help nor hinder the adventurers. Characters who visit one of Nulb's businesses can buy what they need at normal prices, but the proprietors appear anxious to be rid of them.

The white raven Smoke perches atop the sagging roof of a seemingly abandoned farmhouse on the northeast edge of the village. As the characters explore this location, Jeet's companion patiently waits for them. The bird cannot be persuaded to accompany the characters inside.

Whether the characters move through the village or skirt around it, their presence attracts attention from the villagers, who watch the adventurers' every move while keeping their distance. If the characters threaten these villagers, an angry mob of fifteen **human commoners** attacks. The mob disperses if five or more commoners are killed.

Boatman's Tavern and Market

This large warehouse sports a general store and a small tavern in one back corner. The proprietor is a retired human smuggler named Skole. He owes money to river bandits and was forced to sell his establishment to a **human commoner** named Lodriss. She poses as a barmaid and is married to a notorious bandit leader named Tolub.

Searching for Dennek: Skole and Dennek are "friends" in the loosest sense. Which is to say, Skole would gladly sell out Dennek if he knew where he was. Dennek has not been seen in months and Skole doesn't know where he's hiding out.

If the characters become a nuisance, Lodriss asks them to leave. If they challenge or defy her, she alerts eight **human warriors** (evil bandits) working on the docks behind the tavern. Lodriss lets the bandits and the adventurers duke it out, but if half or more of the bandits are defeated, she flees to the docks and tries to escape by boat downriver. She doesn't know where Dennek might be, but given his fondness for ale, she thinks the proprietor of the Waterside Hostel (her competition) might know.

Mother Screng's Herb Store

This dilapidated establishment is run by Mother Screng, a hunchbacked human crone with unkempt gray hair, and her hideous middle-aged daughter, Hruda. The two live together in the back of the store, which is crowded with all manner of herbs, poultices, and medicines.

Searching for Dennek: Mother Screng is actually a cleric of Saint Cuthbert named Y'dey in disguise. Y'dey hails from the nearby village of Hommlet. She came to Nulb to learn as much as she can about the Temple of Elemental Evil. She uses a gray wig, thick makeup, a false nose, and a fake hump to conceal her normal self. Her "daughter" is an elf rogue named Murfles, who is Otis the smith's sometime adventuring companion (see below).

If they determine that the adventurers are on their side, "Mother Screng" and "Hruda" reveal that Nulb is infested with evil spies, and that anyone who pokes around the abandoned farmhouse on the northeast edge of the village ends up dead. "Hruda" also recalls that Dennek is friends with the proprietor of the Boatman's Tavern and Market. If the adventurers express a desire to investigate the old farmhouse, Y'dey provides each character with a *potion of healing*.

Smithy and Stable

This sturdy stone edifice has a sod roof and a large chimney made of mud bricks. The smith, Otis, is a giant of a human with a thick, bushy beard. He claims to be an ex-mercenary and has the fighting skills to back up that claim. He employs a rat-faced human apprentice named Sammy and a dull-witted stable groom named Chon, both humans barely in their teens.

Searching for Dennek: Otis's secret is that he's a knight of Veluna with ties to the Righteous Host. If the adventurers appear to be working on behalf of Prince Thrommel, Viscount Wilfrick, and their allies, Otis quietly shares his suspicion that the temple has a hidden stronghold in Nulb. He doesn't know where, but he thinks the evil mercenaries who frequent the Waterside Hostel might know. Otis was hoping to question one of them at some point, but he is hesitant to blow his cover.

Otis is secretly allied with Mother Screng. He might point helpful characters her way.

Treasure: Otis keeps his most prized possession, a *+1 long sword*, wrapped in cloth and hidden under a loose floorboard in the back of his smithy. Finding it requires a thorough search of the establishment and a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Search) check.

The Waterside Hostel

This rat-infested building has a foundation of fieldstone and walls of sawed timber. Its proprietor, Dick Rentsch, is a tall, grubby human with a pockmarked visage and a patch over his left eye (which he lost in a sword fight). He employs two foul-mouthed, slightly built girls named Dala and Pearl, whom Dick refers to as his "wenches."

Dala and Pearl might try to pilfer a few coins from careless visitors, but otherwise Dick runs an honest (if filthy) business. During the day, 2d6 **human commoners** are drinking in the tavern room. At night, the local clientele are driven away by a gang of 2d6 **human warriors**—evil mercenaries paying their "good friend Dick" a visit.

Searching for Dennek: Characters who defeat the human warriors in combat can gain information from survivors with a successful DC 10 Charisma (Intimidation or Persuasion) check. The mercenaries reveal that the abandoned farmhouse on the northeast edge of Nulb has a tunnel complex hidden beneath it that agents of the Temple of Elemental Evil use as a meeting place. The agents employ mercenaries to guard the farmhouse whenever "big things are afoot."

The Farmhouse

When the characters approach the farmhouse, read the following.

Jeet's white raven perches on a rusty weather vane on the roof of a dilapidated, two-story farmhouse. Its windows are boarded up, its sturdy front door and the padlocked door to a root cellar closed. Near the farmhouse, a smaller, more ramshackle building squats in the mud near the edge of a dismal marsh.

Living like rats in the old farmhouse are six **human warriors**—mercenaries employed to slay trespassers and dispose of corpses in the nearby marsh. Locals avoid the place, so the mercenaries don't have much to do except sit around and sharpen their weapons during the day and sleep at night. Two of the mercenaries are situated on the ground floor, with the other four near windows on the upper floor.

Characters can glean the following information by reconnoitering the farmhouse from a safe distance.

- Boarded windows line the northern and southern sides of the farmhouse. Characters approaching from the east or west cannot be seen from those windows.
- Gaps between the boards covering the windows are large enough to see through.
- The smaller building is a combined outhouse, tool shed, and chicken coop.

1. Living Room

The front door is barred shut from within and requires a successful DC 15 Strength check to break down. The door can also be attacked: AC 10; hp 20; resistant to piercing; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, and all conditions.

The couches, chairs, and tables in this room are arranged haphazardly and look poorly maintained and little used. A narrow hearth in the corner by the stairs is stained with soot.

A **human warrior** named Aldo Vrant stands guard near the western window. He takes his job seriously and is spoiling for a fight.

2. Wooden Stairs

This wooden staircase creaks whenever someone walks on it, imposing disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.

3. Makeshift Bedroom

Two bedrolls are spread on the floor here, the stench of cheap pipeweed hanging heavy in the air.

One bedroll conceals a pouch that contains an electrum ring (35 gp), a silver necklace (15 gp), and a gold brooch shaped like a carp (50 gp).

4. Cluttered Kitchen

The messy kitchen smells of spoiled food and woodsmoke. A table in the middle of the room is surrounded by old chairs. Dishes are piled on the counters. A soot-stained hearth stands in one corner.

A **human warrior** named Nythan Blacksword stands guard near the window. This foul-mouthed mercenary carries a key to the padlock on the root cellar door (area 5).

5. Root Cellar Entry

The root cellar is accessible through a wooden door secured by a rusted padlock (DC 15 Dexterity check to pick). The lock can also be smashed (AC 10; hp 20; resistant to piercing and slashing; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, and all conditions). Beyond the door, moldy stone steps lead down into area 12.

6. Upstairs Hall and Closet

At the top of the stairs is a hallway with two doors on each side to the north and south. At the end of the hall stands another door.

The door at the end opens into an empty closet.

7. Bedroom

Two bedrolls lie on the floor of this room.

A **human warrior** named Charlie Mews stands guard near the window of this room. The youngest mercenary, he is not willing to die and surrenders if he takes 5 or more damage.

8. Master Bedroom

A smashed wooden bed frame, a torn mattress stuffed with moldy straw, a chair with slashed upholstery, and other wreckage litter this room. Several violently slain rats are scattered about. A cold hearth is set in the corner nearest the door.

A **human warrior** named Tarlin Thister stands guard near the window. Tarlin is a humorless sociopath who captures, tortures, and kills rats when he has nothing better to do.

Treasure: A search of the fireplace accompanied by a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Search) check reveals that the mantle is a lid to a cubbyhole underneath. Within this compartment is a rolled-up deed to the farmhouse, a pouch containing 50 sp, and a sheathed dagger.

The dagger has the word "Aldar" etched on the blade in flowing Common script. A character who grasps the dagger and speaks that word causes it to glow as bright as a torch. The dagger remains illuminated until it is sheathed. It has no other magical properties but is worth 100 gp.

9. Empty Room

A fat **human warrior** named Rascoe Dalx stands guard near the window of this otherwise empty room. A few harmless rats scuttle about, and Rascoe likes to feed them bits of moldy cheese to pass the time.

10. Bedroom

This room contains a stone hearth in one corner and two bedrolls on the floor.

The leader of the mercenary gang, a clever and cautious **human warrior** named Wesley Ratshadow, stands near the south-facing window.

Treasure: Wesley carries a pouch containing four 25 gp gems. He also has a secret pocket stitched into his leather armor that requires a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Search) check to find. Within this pocket is a folded piece of parchment with the following words scrawled on it in Common:

WATER, AIR, FIRE, EARTH

These words, spoken in order, allow one to safely bypass the flesh golem in area 15.

11. Outhouse and Chicken Coop

This small building contains an outhouse, an empty toolshed, and a large chicken coop that can be accessed by a secret door. Any character examining the exterior of the chicken coop and succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Search) check finds the secret door. The room beyond has straw covering the stone floor. Hidden under the straw is an unlocked wooden trapdoor that pulls open to reveal a wooden ladder descending into area 14.

The Raiders' Warrens

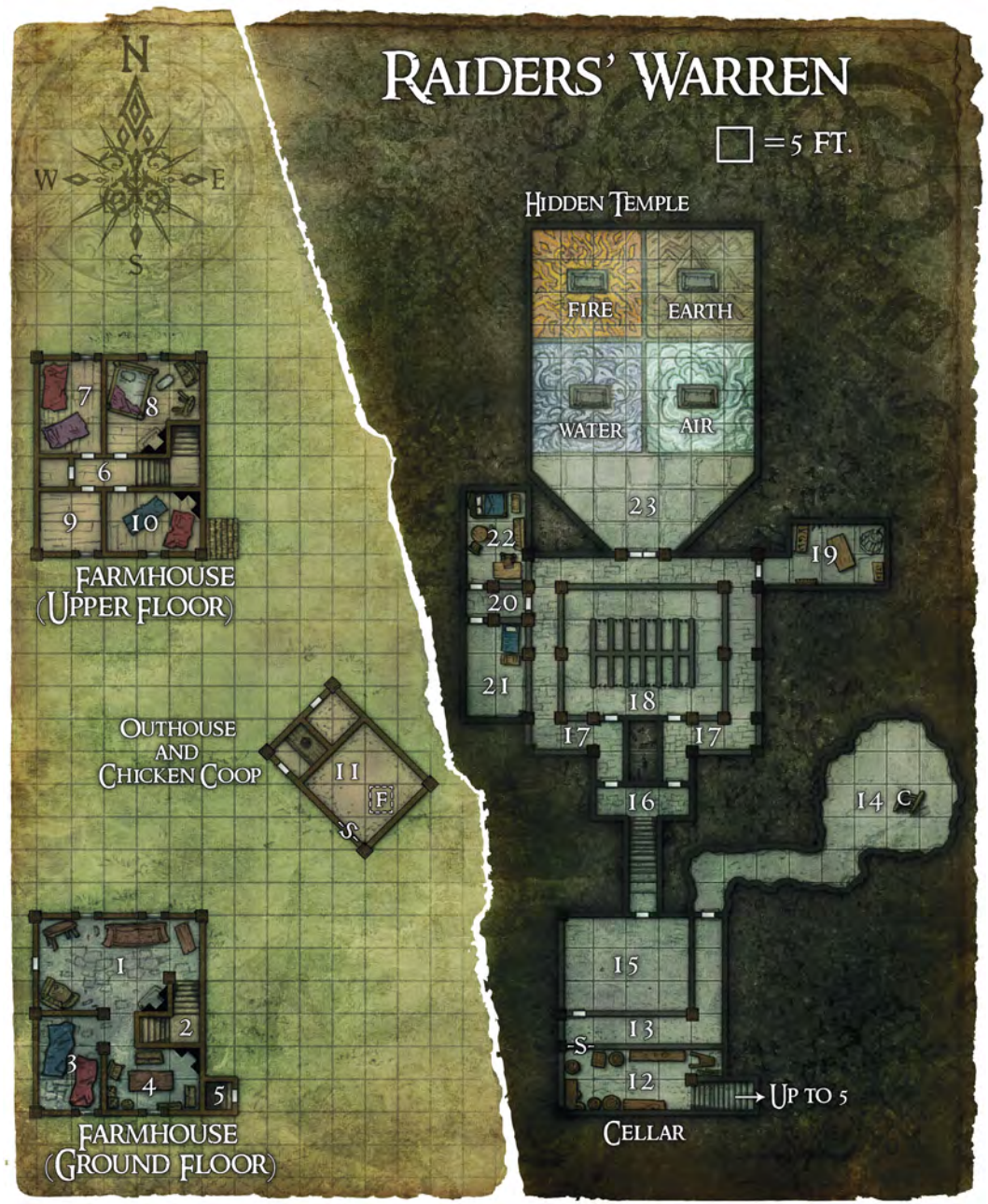
Forces allied with the Temple of Elemental Evil use this underground complex as a staging area for raids against villages, towns, and strongholds under the protection of the Righteous Host. Any character with knowledge of stonemasonry can tell the dungeon construction is recent. Unless otherwise noted, the dungeon has the following common features.

Ceilings: Hallway ceilings are 8 feet high, arched, and made of stone. In rooms, the ceilings are flat and 10 feet high.

Doors: Most doors are unlocked, made of sturdy oak planks held together with iron bands, and fitted with iron hinges and handles.

Walls: The walls are made of stone bricks reinforced with granite columns.

Light: Areas are unlit unless otherwise noted.



12. Root Cellar

This root cellar has a dirt floor, reinforced stone walls, and a stone ceiling. Several empty barrels and crates are piled against the walls, while shovels, hoes, and picks rusted from disuse are tucked around the corner to the right of the stairs. Crude wooden shelves along the north and south walls hold more rubbish.

An obvious trail of human-sized footprints is clearly visible in the dirt floor, leading from the staircase to a secret door in the west corner of the north wall. The tracks make the secret door equally obvious. The door swings open into the hallway to the north (area 13).

13. L-Shaped Passage

Next to each door leading to areas 14 and 15, an unlit lantern hangs from an iron spike embedded in the stone.

The secret door in the southwest requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Search) check to notice from this side.

14. Orc Cellar

This 10-foot-high chamber lies directly beneath the chicken coop (area 11). A 10-foot-tall wooden ladder leads up to an unlocked wooden trapdoor in the western ceiling.

Six **orcs** guard this chamber. If attacked from above, they attempt to climb the ladder to confront enemies head-on. If that doesn't work, they retreat into the western tunnel and try to draw foes down into the room. The orcs have instructions to not enter area 15, but they otherwise pursue fleeing characters relentlessly.

Treasure: Each orc has a belt pouch containing 1d6 gp.

15. The Guardian

This chamber is bereft of furnishings. Set into the far wall is a heavy oak door with an iron lock built into it. Burned into the door's surface are crude symbols representing the four elements: air, earth, fire, and water.

A broad, 7-foot-tall shirtless human with mottled skin stands in front of the door. Stitches and scars crisscross his body. Although he acknowledges your presence with a slight turn of his head, he otherwise remains motionless.

The tall figure is a **flesh golem** that attacks any creature other than Skellen (its creator and master in area 21) that touches it or the northern door. If a creature in the room speaks the correct pass phrase ("Water, air, fire, earth"), the golem opens the door and steps aside to let the room's inhabitants pass through. It then closes the door and returns to its guard position. It does not harm or stand in the way of creatures that enter the room through the north door.

The golem can chase enemies into area 16 but otherwise has orders to stay in this chamber. If it goes berserk, it ignores those orders.

16. Barred Iron Doors

This T-shaped stone corridor contains a staircase that descends 10 feet to a landing with two identical iron doors set into the north wall. The doors have handles and hinges on the north side but are blank and featureless on the south side facing the staircase landing. The doors are also barred on the north side. Each door has AC 15; hp 80; resistant to piercing and slashing; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, and all conditions.

Two minotaurs stand guard on the north side of these doors in area 17. Either minotaur can be tricked into opening the iron doors if it hears an unidentifiable noise in this area that doesn't sound like intruders. If intruders break through an iron door into one side of area 17, the minotaur on the other side of area 17 flings its door open and enters the fray through this area.

17. Hall of the Elements

A foul, bestial stench pervades this tunnel. The reinforced stone walls are painted with colorful murals depicting the elemental planes and their monstrous denizens. Support columns are set with iron sconces holding lit torches.

One of two **minotaurs** stands in front of each door leading from area 16 to area 17.

Crystal Doors: The double doors leading to area 23 are made of opaque white crystal.

Murals: The elemental murals on the walls are painstakingly rendered. Among the figures represented are monstrous depictions of the four Princes of Elemental Evil—Imix, Ogrémoch, Olhydra, and Yan-C-Bin. Characters recognize them with a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana, History, or Religion) check.

18. Hidden Evil

The doors leading to this room are locked from the outside (DC 17 Dexterity check to pick). A door can be forced open with a successful DC 20 Strength check or smashed open (AC 10; hp 30; resistant to piercing; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, all conditions). A character who listens at either door and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check hears a soft, childlike whimpering beyond.

When the characters gain entry, read the following.

The flagstone floor of this chamber is splattered with dried blood. In the middle of the room, stone cells are stacked two rows high facing north and south, with a padlocked iron door set into the front of each one. Six prisoners can be seen in the cells. A ring of iron keys hangs from a hook on the south wall, between the two exits.

The room has 24 stone cells, each 2 feet wide, 4 feet deep, and 4 feet high. The padlocks on the cage doors can be unlocked using the keys hanging on the wall. They can also be picked (DC 15 Dexterity check) or smashed individually with a single solid strike from a slashing or bludgeoning weapon.

Prisoners: The six captives are a human couple—Edwin and Helga Summervale (ages 37 and 33, respectively)—and their four children—Castor (17), Alexa (15), Darryl (12), and Vera (8). The Summervales were kidnapped from their farm on the outskirts of the neighboring village of Griffithton and brought here at night. Edwin doesn't know why they were kidnapped, but he gladly shares the following information.

- "We were brought here with hoods over our heads, so we don't know where we are or how to get out."
- "This place is some sort of evil temple. The human and orc bandits who kidnapped us work for an evil priest whose skin is covered with horrible scars, as if he was burned alive or something. He spoke with a deep, gravelly voice."
- "A small, scruffy human was imprisoned here briefly. The evil priest called him 'Dennek' and seemed angry with him. The poor fellow was dragged away a short time ago. We could hear his screams through the walls. Sounded like he was being tortured."

Helga says nothing as she clings to her children, apparently overwhelmed by her ordeal. In reality, however, she is a cultist of Elemental Evil and knows the two priests, Aulsifer and Skellen, who run the temple. Tired of being a mere farmer's wife and secretly craving power and wealth, she arranged to have her children brought here so they could be sacrificed in area 23. She arranged her husband's kidnapping as well, knowing his presence would help keep the children calm.

Helga's decision to be imprisoned with her family was a calculated move, meant to ensure nothing untoward happens to the children before the sacrificial rituals can be performed. When that is done, she has faith that the Princes of Elemental Evil will reward her.

Helga has the statistics of a **human commoner** and conceals a dagger on her person. A character can spot the weapon with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If Helga has an opportunity to delay her family's escape or bring the wrath of the temple's defenders down on the party, she takes it. As a last resort, she grabs Vera and uses the child as a hostage while negotiating with the characters to flee the temple without her family.

19. Torture Chamber

This room reeks of sweat and blood. A cage hangs from the ceiling against the far wall, next to a small table covered with bloody knives and other implements. Beneath a hanging lantern, Dennek is shackled to a large wooden table in the middle of the room.

Dennek is unconscious but alive, thanks to the priests who tortured him. A character can revive Dennek by restoring at least 1 hit point, at which point he relays the following story.

"The whole camp was thrown into chaos when the forces of Elemental Evil attacked. An ogre overturned my prison wagon, then tore the back door off its hinges. I stumbled out, used my shackles to strangle one of the dwarf jailers, and took the key from his belt. That's when I saw a horrible demon descend upon a group of knights and clerics. One of the clerics was cradling a book in his arms, and when he got split in two, I took the book and ran. I was halfway to Nulb by the time I realized what the book was, at which point the farmhouse seemed like the safest place to hide.

"The book is called Spiral of Darkness: A Demon Binder's Guide to the Abyss. *I think the Righteous Host planned to use it in a ritual to trap a powerful demon inside the Temple of Elemental Evil.*

"After I gave the book to Aulsifer, one of the priests here, he imprisoned and tortured me. He wanted to know if I'd divulged the location of his secret temple. I told him I hadn't, but then I laughed and told him about you, because if anyone could find this place, it's you. Guess I was right!"

Dennek assumes that there are plenty of witnesses to his crimes, and he doesn't bother to hide his cowardice or malfeasance. He knows the general layout of the underground complex and can provide the following additional information.

- Two cultists who refer to themselves as priests run this complex. Aulsifer is a water cultist who believes he was rescued by Olhydra, the Princess of Elemental Evil Water, after nearly burning to death as a child. The other priest, Skellen, is an earth cultist and the dungeon's architect.
- The cultists use orcs and human brigands to do most of their dirty work. Skellen also has a pet gray ooze that follows him around.
- The stolen tome is probably in Aulsifer's personal quarters (area 22).
- The temple proper (area 23) contains four altars, each one dedicated to an element. The cultists appease their Princes of Elemental Evil by performing human sacrifices on their respective altars. Unless he is freed, Dennek assumes that will be his fate.

Dennek has the statistics of a **human commoner**. His wrists and ankles are shackled to the table and he cannot escape without assistance. If the characters release him, he arms himself with a dagger from the table and flees the complex.

20. Hallway

A single lantern hanging from a chain lights this hall, which has a door on each of the north and south walls.

Any noise in this corridor alerts Skellen in area 21 to the presence of intruders. As well, any character who spends more than a few moments outside the door to area 21 draws the attention of the gray ooze, which alerts Skellen.

21. Earth Priest's Quarters

This rectangular room is lit by a lantern hanging above a bed tucked in a corner. At the foot of the bed is a chest of black stone. The walls are painted with murals of stalactites, stalagmites, and crystal formations, making the room feel like a cave.

Skellen can be found here with a demonic **gray ooze** that serves him. The ooze uses the normal gray ooze statistics block but is chaotic evil, has Intelligence 5, and possesses telepathic ability that allows it to communicate with any creature within 30 feet of it.

If Skellen has any warning, he uses *meld into stone* to slip within one of the granite columns that reinforce the brick walls of the dungeon. While melded, he casts protective spells on himself.

The gray ooze clings to the east wall, near the bed and the stone chest, blending with the mural. Spotting it requires a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. The ooze attacks any character who comes within 5 feet of the chest as it telepathically warns its master of the characters' positions.

While the ooze distracts the characters, Skellen emerges from the wall and flees toward area 23, hoping to join Aulsifer. If he is prevented from escaping, he tries to fight his way to freedom.

Skellen has long, wispy white hair and wears an amulet in the form of an inverted basalt pyramid. Half mad and knowing that his fighting days are behind him, he screams oaths such as, "The day will

come when boulders fall like rain from the sky and crush you all!"

Treasure: Skellen carries the key to area 18.

The chest appears to be a solid block of basalt carved in the likeness of a chest, not a real container. A *detect magic* spell cast on the block reveals a strong aura of abjuration. Touching Skellen's amulet to the chest creates a seam that forms a lid, which can then be lifted to reveal a hollow cavity. Within the cavity are three *potions of healing* and a black silk pouch holding four pinches of *dust of dryness*. The chest can be removed from the room, but it weighs 450 pounds.

22. Water Priest's Quarters

Candles and lanterns light this rectangular room, the walls of which are painted with underwater scenes of coral reefs and sunken wrecks, giving the illusion that this room sits on the sea floor. Furnishings include a bed with a carved headboard shaped like a kraken, a desk and matching chair, a round table with two plain wooden chairs, a bookshelf, and a seafarer's trunk with a built-in lock.

The bookshelf holds twenty-five mundane tomes with such titles as *Sanguine Grimoire* (a book of vampire lore), *Burning Tongue* (a book concerning the study of the Infernal language, written in Common), and *Blasphemies of the Unfettered Ones* (a book about the cults of Elemental Evil). These mundane tomes are worth 50 gp each to an interested buyer. The book that Dennek stole is not among these volumes.

Treasure: The trunk is locked (DC 20 Dexterity check to pick). It can be smashed open (AC 10; hp 40; resistant to piercing; immune to cold, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, and all conditions), but doing so breaks a glass compartment in its lid, releasing **green slime** to cover the trunk's contents. The slime is enough to stick to six creatures. It quickly eats the wood and iron bands of the trunk, then spreads onto the floor.

The trunk contains a heap of dirty clothing with two items atop it: an aquamarine pendant on a gold chain and a thick tome bound in red leather. The green slime will destroy the clothing and the book if it is released. The pendant survives, but recovering it requires searching through the slime and succeeding on a DC 20 Intelligence (Search) check.

The aquamarine pendant features a tiny goldfish swimming inside it and radiates faint divination magic under a *detect magic* spell. The pendant is an *amulet of augury* (1,000 gp). Once per day, a character can ask the tiny goldfish a question starting with the phrase, "Tell me, little fish," and receive a telepathic answer as though he or she had cast an *augury* spell.

The red tome is *Spiral of Darkness: A Demon Binder's Guide to the Abyss*, and it contains demon-binding rituals written in several languages. It also has guidance on how to use demon-binding relics, including the Orb of Golden Death—a skull-shaped device powered by magic gems that channel the energy of the four elements. If the book is destroyed by green slime, enough of its cover remains for the characters to recognize it and know that it is lost.

23. Elemental Temple

The double doors leading to this room are made of opaque white crystal. They close on their own unless held or wedged open.

Beyond the white crystal doors stands a room that widens into four quadrants, each containing an altar on which elemental scenes are painted. The floor around each altar is similarly decorated and glows, throwing colorful patterns of light onto the walls and the 10-foot-high ceiling.

In addition to Aulsifer, add Skellen to the following description if he made it to this area.

Standing behind the water altar is a hunched human dressed in blue-green vestments and scale mail. Horrid burns scar his arms and hairless face, and the jagged metal javelin he uses as a cane flickers with lightning.

"I bid you welcome," he says. "Have you come to throw yourselves on the mercy of the elements?"

Aulsifer is an insane cultist, but his insanity can be explained. The son of a struggling fisher, he was doused in pitch and set ablaze by his father in a drunken fury. The boy would have died if a wave from the sea had not swept over him as he ran outside, dousing the flames and impaling his father on the bowsprit of the ship from which their cottage was built. Aulsifer believes that Olhydra saved his life, and that all people should bow to the elements. Use this information to color the cultist's raving as he speaks with or fights the characters.

If the characters do anything but pledge themselves to Elemental Evil, Aulsifer raises his *javelin of lightning* and calls on the elemental princes to defend the temple against the party. His call for aid does not go unanswered.

- An **air elemental** emerges from tiny holes in the air altar and swirls above it menacingly.
- An **earth elemental** warps its way free of the earth altar, taking up a position in front of it.
- The fire altar bursts into flame, creating a **fire elemental** that quickly moves to the floor.
- A **water elemental** pours out of tiny holes in the water altar and takes shape nearby.

If Aulsifer dies, the air, earth, and fire elementals disappear, though the water elemental remains.

Altars and Quadrants: All four altars are stained with the blood of human sacrifices. Destroying an altar banishes the associated elemental and ends the benefit of the associated quadrant. Each altar is AC 10; hp 30; resistant to slashing and piercing; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, forced movement, and all conditions.

- *Air.* The air altar is carved with faces shaped like clouds. Air issues from tiny round holes forming their mouths. In addition to the statistics noted above, the altar is also immune to thunder damage. Any creature in the same quadrant as the air altar has advantage on ranged attack rolls.
- *Earth.* The earth altar is shot through with quartz deposits. In addition to the statistics noted above, it has 20 additional hit points. Any creature in the same quadrant as the earth altar is resistant to bludgeoning, slashing, and piercing damage.
- *Fire.* The fire altar is hot to the touch and adorned with carvings of grinning efreet with flaring nostrils. In addition to the statistics noted above, it is immune to fire damage. Any creature in the same quadrant as the fire altar is resistant to fire damage and deals 1d6 extra fire damage on melee weapon attacks.
- *Water.* The water altar features coral embedded in its sides, as well as sculpted images of entwined eels and squid. In addition to the statistics noted above, the altar is immune to cold damage. Any creature in the same quadrant as the water altar gains advantage on melee attack rolls.

Aulsifer and Skellen move into the air quadrant before making ranged attacks, and stand in the water quadrant while making melee attacks. If either cultist drops to half hit points or fewer, he moves to the earth or fire quadrant, then quaffs a *potion of healing*.

Treasure: On a chain around his neck, Aulsifer has the key to area 18 and the key to his trunk in area 22. He is armed with a *javelin of lightning* and carries three *potions of healing*.

Aftermath

When the characters are ready to leave Nulb, Jeet's white raven alights from the rooftop of the old farmhouse and leads them to Prince Thrommel's new camp 4 hours away. No random encounters occur en route, since the Battle of Emridy Meadows is well underway.

If the characters have Dennek in custody and return the spy to the Righteous Host, the war council has him swiftly put to death for his crimes of murder and theft. After Dennek is beheaded, his head is mounted on a spear for all to see.

Quest 5: Deliver the Book

If the characters return *Spiral of Darkness: A Demon Binder's Guide to the Abyss* to the war council, the Righteous Host's morale receives a much-needed boost. The party succeeds on this quest. Otherwise, the characters incur a quest failure.

Quest 6: Deliver the Horn

If the characters give Prince Thrommel and his allies the *horn of blasting* claimed from Kell the Eldest, the Righteous Host uses this magic item to the detriment of its enemies. The party succeeds on this quest. Otherwise, the characters incur a quest failure.

The Battle of Emridy Meadows

By the time the characters complete their missions and rejoin the Righteous Host, the Battle of Emridy Meadows is underway. Before rolling a d20 to determine the outcome of the battle, the characters can further affect that outcome by joining the fight against the forces of Elemental Evil.

To help the players decide whether to participate in the battle, first determine the current modifier to the d20 roll using the quest tracker, then read the appropriate text below.

If the modifier is currently -20 or -15, read:

Jeet shoots you a frightened look as Wilfrick, his face white with fear, reads early reports from the front. Girt Stonebones can barely contain his rage, and you can see the cracks forming in Prince Thrommel's normally stoic facade.

"This isn't working!" shouts the dwarf. "The enemy is more organized than we anticipated! We're getting crushed out there! We need to dig in and hold what little ground we've won."

"No," Thrommel replies. "We need to drive wedges through the enemy lines. If we back down, the battle will be lost."

"We need a miracle," insists Wilfrick.

"There's no such thing," quips the old gnome.

Thrommel

If the modifier is currently -10 or -5, read:
Jeet shoots you a concerned look as Wilfrick reads early reports from the front with a trembling hand. Girt Stonebones folds his arms across his armored chest in disgust, while Prince Thrommel keeps his emotions under heavy guard.

"We knew this battle wasn't going to be easy," says the prince. "We need to keep at it. If we back down, all will be lost."

"We need a miracle," insists Wilfrick.

"I'd settle for a dollop of good luck," quips the old gnome.

"Bah!" says the dwarf. "Girt Stonebones doesn't believe in miracles or luck! If that's all we got, we don't deserve victory!"

If the modifier is currently +0 or +5, read:
Jeet is a bundle of nerves as Wilfrick reads the latest reports from the front lines. The mood is one of cautious optimism.

"It's not all bad news," quips the old gnome.

"I told you!" says Girt Stonebones. "The dwarves of the Lortmils would sooner shave their beards than yield to the hordes of Elemental Evil!"

"Let's hope it doesn't come to that," replies Prince Thrommel. "The battle is far from decided, but our victories thus far have pushed the enemy back on its heels."

The prince's stab at humor seems lost on poor Wilfrick, who says, "Let us pray we have the strength to knock them down for good."

If the modifier is currently +10 or +15, read:
Jeet smiles as she listens to Wilfrick read early reports from the front lines. Girt Stonebones chortles at the enemy's setbacks, and Prince Thrommel can barely contain his pride.

"The gods are smiling," says Wilfrick.

"Phooey!" quips the old gnome. "We have no one to thank but these heroes. Without them, we'd be running for the hills by now."

"Speak for yourself!" says the dwarf. "Girt Stonebones runs from nothing! The only thing we dwarves love more than gold is victory!"

"Let's not speak of victory just yet," warns the prince. "The enemy might still surprise us."

If the characters want to participate in the coming battle, proceed with the next section. Otherwise, skip to "Concluding the Adventure."

Final Mission

If the characters join in the battle, read the following.

Thrommel is touched by your dedication. "Whether the Battle of Emridy Meadows is lost or won," he says, "your heroism will not be forgotten."

Thrommel asks the characters to gather around the war council's table as he unfurls several maps of Emridy Meadows. He then identifies three different missions and lets the adventurers decide which one to tackle.

- **Fire on the Fens of Tor:** Help a team of dwarves transport a large supply of alchemist's fire.
- **Mill on Bald Hill:** Help defend a field hospital set up in an old windmill.
- **Tower at Wyther's Bridge:** Sneak behind enemy lines to topple a signal tower.

Thrommel warns the characters that they must hasten. All the missions have a timeline that makes resting impossible.

Fire on the Fens of Tor

"A team of dwarf saboteurs is carrying a supply of alchemist's fire, skirting around enemy lines by creeping through the Fens of Tor. They could use help reaching the outskirts of the temple."

The characters travel by horse to a marshy meadow called the Fens of Tor, then set out on foot through the difficult terrain of the fens. Their goal is a group of six dwarves (use the **shield dwarf** statistics) transporting a small raft laden with 12 casks of alchemist's fire. Each cask weighs 25 pounds and explodes on impact, dealing 21 (6d6) fire damage to creatures and objects in a 20-foot-radius sphere, or half that damage with a successful DC 11 Dexterity saving throw.

Hydra: As the characters move through the fens, a **hydra** attacks.

Under Attack: An hour after encountering the hydra, the characters discover the dwarves under attack by seven **giant frogs**. The characters start out 50 feet away from the battle.

During the fight, three **hill giants** patrolling the marsh hear the sounds of combat. The giants are 150 feet away when the first character enters combat.

If the characters kill four frogs, the rest flee. If two giants are slain, the third tries to retreat.

The hill giants carry three empty sacks each. If they defeat the adventurers and the dwarves, they stuff the casks of alchemist's fire in their sacks and return to the Temple of Elemental Evil in victory.

Delivering the Casks: At least one dwarf (who knows where to deliver the casks) and half the casks must survive for the party to succeed on this mission.

Mill on Bald Hill

"Three clerics of Saint Cuthbert are running a field hospital in an old windmill on Bald Hill near the Meadows, close to the battle lines. Without Serten's protection, I fear for their safety. We need to make sure they're all right."

The characters travel on foot across a vast stretch of farmland owned by Lord Zaltar Strackl, a respectable landowner. Strackl's land is dotted with stone windmills, one of which sits atop a barren hill near enough to the battle lines to serve as a makeshift hospital.

Hungry Trolls: As the characters cross Strackl's fields, they encounter two **trolls** that slipped out from behind enemy lines. The trolls are chasing a wild deer, but the animal has eluded them. If the adventurers draw attention to themselves, the trolls give up on catching the deer and attack the party instead.

Black Dragon: When the characters finish with the trolls, they spot a **black dragon** circling in the sky ahead. Any character who succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can tell that the dragon's flight path is taking it toward the field hospital. A character who succeeds by 5 or more can estimate that the party has 1 hour before the dragon gets there.

Windmill: Bald Hill gets its name from the fact that little grass or vegetation grows atop it. When the characters arrive at the windmill, four **human warriors** wearing the livery of Furyondy are standing guard outside. Three young clerics of Saint Cuthbert are within, tending to injured soldiers.

The black dragon circles near enough to see the windmill and its guards 1 hour after the party finishes with the hungry trolls. It then attacks.

The clerics remain inside to protect the wounded, but the human warriors aid the characters against the dragon. If reduced to half hit points or fewer, the dragon flees.

Chapel of Saint Vargus: After the battle, the clerics ask the characters to escort them to a fallback location, certain that evil forces will come to the windmill after seeing the dragon's attack. The old stone chapel they speak of is next to a small cemetery a mile away.

When the characters reach the stone chapel, they see five **ghouls** digging up the graves in the old cemetery outside. The human warriors and clerics rush into the chapel while the adventurers confront the ghouls. Inside the chapel, the ghouls have disadvantage on their attack rolls and saving throws.

Protecting the Clerics: To succeed on this mission, the adventurers must deal with the dragon, eliminate the ghouls, and leave at least two clerics alive in the chapel.

Tower at Wyther's Bridge

"The enemy has raised a signal tower on the far side of Wyther's Bridge, which spans a ravine with a creek running through it. Before we capture the bridge, we need to take out or capture that tower."

The characters travel by horse to the battlefront, then dismount and sneak behind enemy lines on foot.

Stealthy Approach: To slip behind enemy lines undetected, each character must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) check. If two or more characters fail the check, they are spotted by 12 **orcs** and their **orog** leader, all hunkered down in ditches. The ditches are each 10–15 feet long and are spread across a wide meadow. If the characters defeat the orcs, they can press on without fear of being spotted again before the bridge.

Wyther's Bridge: The safest and most expeditious way to cross a mile-long ravine, Wyther's Bridge is a 10-foot-wide covered wooden structure that spans a 30-foot-wide, 30-foot-deep ravine with a shallow creek running through it. On the near side of the bridge stands an **ettin** that talks to itself constantly. The ettin hollers when it spots approaching enemies, alerting the gargoyles on the signal tower 60 feet away. If the tower comes under attack, the ettin crosses the bridge to join the fray.

Signal Tower: On the far side of Wyther's Bridge stands the enemy's signal tower: a crude, 30-foot-tall wooden structure with a narrow spiral staircase rising to the 10-foot-wide platform that forms its roof. A pitch-covered pyre of wood and kindling rests atop the platform. Hanging off the corners of the roof are four burning oil lanterns.

Four **gargoyles** perch on the roof above the lanterns. If they think enemies are about to take the bridge or the tower, they each use an action to grab a lantern and smash it on the pyre, igniting the pitch and creating a huge bonfire that can be seen for miles. If this happens, or if the bonfire is lit some other way, the party fails on this mission.

Characters must find a way to destroy or put out the lanterns before they're used to light the bonfire. Each lantern hangs 30 feet off the ground and is AC 5/AC 15 against ranged attacks; hp 2; immune to necrotic, poison, psychic, and all conditions. The lanterns cannot be reached from the tower's central staircase, but a character can reach one by scaling the outside of the tower. Climbing is normally easy, but a character must succeed on a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check to hang on if he or she takes damage.

The gargoyles have no way to light lanterns that have been extinguished, and they have no other means to light the bonfire if the lanterns are put out or destroyed. When the bonfire is lit, or if they realize they can't light the signal, the gargoyles swoop down and attack any enemies they see.

Destroy the Signal Pyre: After dealing with the gargoyles and the ettin, the characters can collapse the tower in 20 minutes. Alternatively, they can push the pyre materials off the rooftop and hold the tower until the forces of the Righteous Host arrive 1 hour later. In either case, they succeed on their mission.

Aftermath

Successful completion of one of the missions counts as a success on a quest, allowing the characters to improve the Righteous Host's chance of victory. Failing a mission does not incur a quest failure.

If the players are having fun battling the forces of Elemental Evil, feel free to stage additional encounters in the fields of Emridy Meadows. A few brief ideas are presented here.

- An evil wizard has unleashed several **animated suits of armor**.
- Dwarf warriors (**shield dwarf** statistics) are fending off two **fire elementals** that are setting fire to supply wagons.
- A small group of elves recently allied with the Righteous Host (**wood elf** statistics) are trading arrows with a larger force of **orcs**. The adventurers can sneak behind the orcs while they're distracted and take them out.

- Two **griffons** are accosting a **human warrior** riding a **horse**. The warrior is a Righteous Host scout and the griffons are hungry for horse flesh. If the characters slay a griffon, the other flies away.
- The characters stumble on a major battle between **human warriors** allied with the Righteous Host and **orcs** and **orogs** allied with the Temple of Elemental Evil. Five **ogres** bolster the orc forces. If the characters can take out the ogres quickly, the Righteous Host warriors stand a good chance of winning the battle.

Concluding the Adventure

As detailed in "Tracking Quests," a modified d20 roll determines who wins the Battle of Emridy Meadows.

Good Prevails

If the result is 15 or higher, read the following.

News travels fast across Emridy Meadows. The enemy has been driven back to the temple, its armies broken. Fields are littered with the corpses of soldiers and monsters, with victory won at great cost. Forces of good have the temple surrounded. The evil has been contained!

When you return to Prince Thrommel's camp, the leaders of the Righteous Host are geared up for the final advance. "Time to put those demons in their place!" proclaims Viscount Wilfrick, "and banish the threat of Elemental Evil forever from these lands!"

Thrommel dons his helmet as he turns to face you. "You have played your part," he says with a smile. "Leave the rest to us."

If the characters wish to accompany the leaders of the Righteous Host to the gates of the temple, they are free to do so. The Battle of Emridy Meadows has ended, though, and the adventure is over. All that remains is for the forces of good to breach the temple gates, destroy the remnants of the evil army, and magically trap Zuggtmoy, all of which goes well.

Feel free to roleplay further interactions with the various leaders, as well as introduce new NPCs such as an elf representative from the Gnarley Forest or another member of the Citadel of Eight. Various leaders might offer the characters tokens of gratitude and invitations to attend victory celebrations.

Evil Wins

If the result is 14 or lower, read the following.

News travels fast across Emridy Meadows, and the news is not good. Despite your valiant efforts, the forces of evil have proven too much for the combined might of Furyondy, Veluna, and their allies. It won't be long before the armies of Elemental Evil lay siege to the walls of Greyhawk itself.

As you reach Thrommel's camp, you see that most of his soldiers and followers have fled. The prince stands ankle-deep in mud, staring up at the sky, his battle standard on the ground behind him.

"You did as well as could be expected," he says forlornly. "You truly are the best of us."

A squire hands the prince his battered helm. He studies it for a moment, then dons it. "Hommlet will be the first to fall, but we'll defend it to the last. If you have homes to protect, I suggest you go to them now."

Thrommel's defense of Hommlet proves futile. The prince is captured by the enemy, transformed into a vampire, and locked away in the temple for all time.

Continuing the Adventure

Although "The Battle of Emridy Meadows" is written as a self-contained adventure, a number of its plot threads can be expanded. New adventure opportunities include the following.

In Hommlet's Defense: If the Battle of Emridy Meadows was lost, the characters can help defend the village of Hommlet against a full-scale attack. Lareth the Beautiful, a cleric allied with the Temple of Elemental Evil, leads his army to a ruined moat house on the outskirts of the village and transforms it into his base camp. Thrommel might urge the characters to assail the moat house while he and his soldiers do their best to protect the village.

Dog King's Shield: A character attuned to *Bitbaern's shield* (see Gnaragg's statistics) can concentrate to sense that the item is pointing the character toward a specific destination. The shield might lead the characters to the final resting place of Bitbaern (a human hero from bygone days) or some other location tied to its history.

Lich's Revenge: If the characters defeated Kell the Eldest, the lich reforms in 1d10 days and seeks revenge. Knowing that Kell is a lich might inspire the adventurers to find and destroy his phylactery before he has time to reform. Using their newfound contacts in the Righteous Host, the characters have no trouble learning the whereabouts of Kell's lair, but finding the phylactery in time might prove difficult.

The Temple of Elemental Evil: Players might be tempted to explore the Temple of Elemental Evil, in which case you can adapt the original AD&D™ adventure and run it using the D&D Next rules. Simply swap out monsters that don't appear in the D&D Next playtest documents.

About the Authors

Jon Leitheusser is the *Mutants & Masterminds* line developer for Green Ronin Publishing and the business administrator for Lone Wolf Development. One of his favorite characters, a magic-user named Benjamin Regalford, made it to 18th level before being turned to stone by a basilisk.

Christopher Perkins writes D&D adventures by day . . . and also by night, apparently, but only when he's not battling the forces of Elemental Evil . . . or whatever Canadians do in the warm, gray Seattle winter.

Appendix: Statistics

Gnaragg (The Dog King)

Medium Humanoid (Gnoll)
Armor Class 18 (scale mail, shield)
Hit Points 71 (11d8 + 22)
Speed 30 ft.
Senses darkvision 60 ft.

Str 18 (+4)	**Dex** 16 (+3)	**Con** 14 (+2)
Int 10 (+0)	**Wis** 12 (+1)	**Cha** 12 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil
Languages Common, Gnoll

Traits

Incite Blood Frenzy: Other creatures of Gnaragg's choice within 30 feet of him do not have disadvantage on attack rolls when using the blood frenzy reaction.

Actions

Multiattack: Gnaragg makes two melee attacks or two ranged attacks. If he hasn't used his whole move for the turn, he can move between attacks.

Melee Attack—Three-Headed Flail: +6 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 11 (1d10 + 6) bludgeoning damage.

Ranged Attack—Longbow: +5 to hit (range 150 ft./600 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

Reactions

Leader Blood Frenzy: When a hostile creature drops to 0 hit points within 10 feet of him, Gnaragg can make a melee attack.

Encounter Building

Level 6 **XP** 730

Bitbaern's Shield

Unknown to him, Gnaragg carries (and is not attuned to) *Bitbaern's shield*. A great hero of a bygone age once used this shield.

Property (Attuned): While you wield this shield, you gain a +1 bonus to AC.

In addition, if you concentrate for 1 round, you can sense which direction is east. Sometimes, you sense that the shield instead points you toward an unknown location. The shield can lead you to places significant to its history.

Aulsifer (Water Cultist)

Medium Humanoid (Human)
Armor Class 14 (scale mail)
Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)
Speed 30 ft.

Str 16 (+3)	**Dex** 11 (+0)	**Con** 14 (+2)
Int 10 (+0)	**Wis** 15 (+2)	**Cha** 13 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil
Languages Aquan, Common

Traits

Spellcasting: Aulsifer is a 7th-level spellcaster who uses Wisdom as his magic ability (+5 to hit; spell save DC 15). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips—*guidance*, *light*, *ray of frost*
1st Level (4/day)—*command*, *inflict wounds*, *shield*
2nd Level (3/day)—*Melf's acid arrow*, *mirror image*
3rd Level (3/day)—*elemental mantle* (water only), *sleet storm*
4th Level (1/day)—*freedom of movement* (casting time swift)

Actions

Melee or Ranged Attack—Javelin of Lightning: +5 to hit (reach 5 ft. or range 30 ft./120 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Javelin of Lightning (1/Day): Aulsifer hurls the javelin, which forms a 100-foot line of lightning. Any creature in the line must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 4d6 lightning damage (half damage on a successful save).

Encounter Building

Level 5 **XP** 300

Skellen (Earth Cultist)

Medium Humanoid (Human)
Armor Class 14 (scale mail)
Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)
Speed 30 ft.

Str 11 (+0)	**Dex** 10 (+0)	**Con** 14 (+2)
Int 14 (+2)	**Wis** 15 (+2)	**Cha** 13 (+1)

Alignment chaotic evil
Languages Common, Terran

Traits

Spellcasting: Skellen is an 8th-level spellcaster who uses Wisdom as his magic ability (spell save DC 15). He has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips—*guidance*, *light*, *resistance*
1st level (4/day)—*cause fear*, *entangle*, *thunderwave*
2nd level (3/day)—*heat metal*, *spider climb*, *spike growth*
3rd level (3/day)—*elemental mantle* (earth only), *meld into stone*
4th level (2/day)—*stoneskin*

Actions

Melee Attack—Crystal Staff: +4 to hit (reach 5 ft.; one creature). *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Encounter Building

Level 5 **XP** 300

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